Music Week

July 2024

"KIDS CAN'T AFFORD TO GET INTO SHOWS, SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE"

LAUREN LAVERNE
On Glastonbury, winning awards & why 6 Music matters more than ever

YUNGBLUD

CAN THIS CULT HERO LEAD A LIVE MUSIC REVOLUTION WITH BLUDFEST?

90 YEARS OF PPL
Celebrating the company that changed the music business

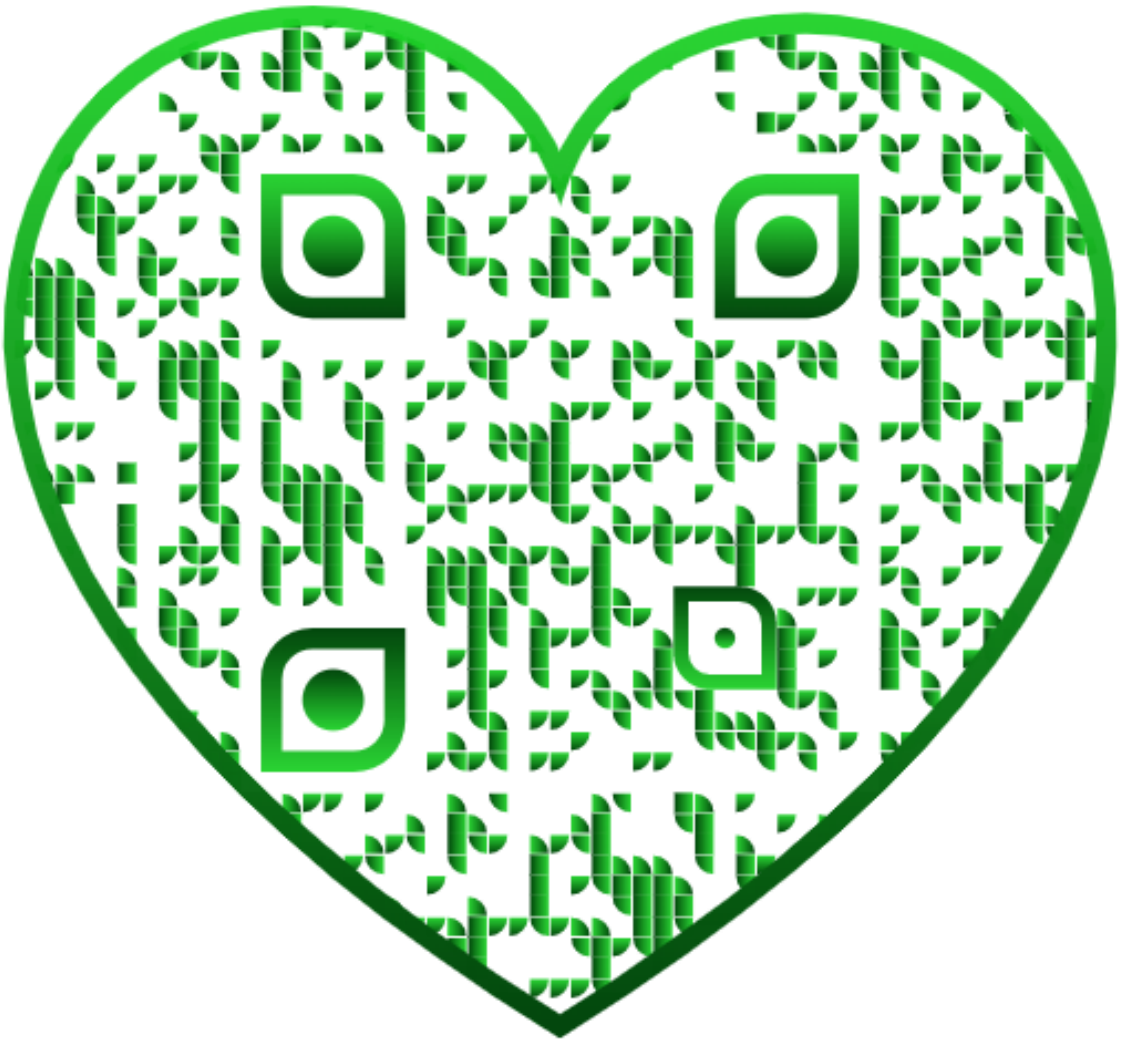
ELTON JACKSON
Heart to heart with Sony Music UK's mental health guru

CATHERINE MARKS
The super-producer's quest to change the studios of tomorrow

GRM DAILY
Koby 'Post' Hagan on 15 years of a British Black music empire

YOUNG SONGS
Their journey from indie newcomers to publishing powerhouse

FUTURE
DIGITAL EDITION



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"My high hopes are getting low"

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Welcome to

Music Week...

First Blud

It is now only a matter of time before I'm stood in various fields around the UK either soaked to the bone or trying to rub suncream out of my burning eyes while I watch a bunch of amazing gigs. It's the most wonderful time of the yeeeeear. The anticipated appearance of the UK's Crap Weather™ aside, we currently look primed for a summer of live music to remember. For one, there are seemingly more headline tours than the UK's assorted stadia and arenas can possibly handle, with everyone from Taylor Swift and Bruce Springsteen to Doja Cat, Pink, AC/DC, Liam Gallagher, Pearl Jam, Green Day and Girls Aloud all on the road. That's to say nothing of the slew of festivals, and not just Glastonbury, Download, Reading And Leeds and BST Hyde Park, but also our many city festivals and boutique operations.

Yet the kick-off of the UK festival season also coincides with a turbulent period of discourse surrounding live music. Some headlines are positive, it's hard not to be excited seeing cities like Liverpool preparing for the Taylor Swift economic boost in grandstanding fashion or the re-opening of the O2 Academy Brixton. Elsewhere, however, stories swell about the plight of grassroots venues, the gender inequality of line-ups, the increasing cost (and lack of availability) of tickets, and more besides. It's the first time I can remember in which the business of live music is seemingly generating more headlines in the mainstream media than ones celebrating the shows themselves.

This is why it made so much sense for Yungblud to appear on our cover as he prepares his very own festival BludFest at Milton Keynes Bowl in August. As you can read on page 24, it was conceived to be an event with ticket prices that are accessible to all, while also keeping its line-up inclusive. Yungblud doesn't exactly mince his words in our feature about the point he's trying to prove and it will be interesting to see how the industry responds to his ideas.

The story of BludFest is one I've been watching carefully for a while, not just for what it represents, but also how it has been received. For months, Yungblud has been engaging with fans on TikTok, not just to promote BludFest but to tackle the questions being asked of him by the public, some of them quite pointed, about ticketing, profits and losses. His TikTok page has turned into an open dialogue where, warts and all, he is essentially demystifying the live music business for a new generation.

A lot of people are understandably viewing BludFest as a test model for the future of artist-led festivals. It makes sense. But I think we should also be gauging just how far his level of transparency about the reality of staging live events in a post-Brexit world can go to putting fans' minds at ease. Consumer frustration has been dictating a lot of the headlines being written in 2024, but the live music sector also has answers, expectations and challenges that aren't always being factored into mainstream coverage. Perhaps we just need more spaces for these conversations to take place.

George Garner, Editor-In-Chief

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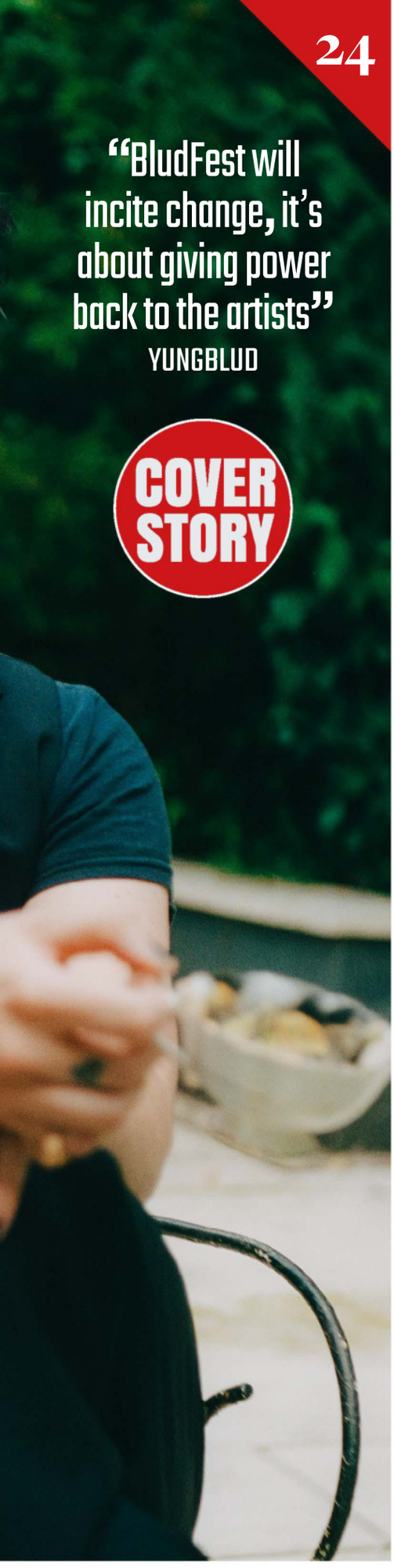
PHOTOS: BBC, Paulina Frączek, Phoebe Fox, Joe Magowan, Louise Haywood-Schiefer, Tom Pallant



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THE BIG STORY

New Yorkshire: AIM and Tileyard North join forces on levelling up for music sector

Following the first industry roundtable in Wakefield, execs from the indie trade body and creative hub outline ambitions for regional collaboration and growth

— BY ANDRE PAINE —

Industry figures from the Association of Independent Music (AIM) and Tileyard North in Wakefield have spoken about the "amazing opportunity" to develop the independent sector in the Yorkshire region.

Following the launch of their collaboration earlier this year, AIM will have a dedicated space at Tileyard North, sister organisation to the Tileyard London creative hub in the capital.

"It was a real opportunity for AIM to expand from being a London-based organisation and to set up some roots in the North of England," said Ben Wynter, AIM's director of business development & partnerships.

Wynter divides his time between London and Wakefield, as he drives the organisation's initiatives in the regions.

"It was about us doubling down on our commitment to serve and contribute to the regions outside of London," explained Wynter. "We're trying to facilitate strong ecosystems and foster growth within the sector in different regions, which means that creative and executive talent isn't lost to London."

Tileyard North opened a year ago with ambitions to be the largest creative community outside of London. It is already home to music composers, producers, independent labels, TV and film production companies, gaming studios and podcasting firms. Phase two of the construction project will see further creative workspaces created alongside a boutique hotel.

Last month Tileyard North hosted a UK country festival in the courtyard featuring Twinnie and Kezia Gill, among others. The development has performance spaces for ticketed events.

"We've got ambitious plans to become a recognised events destination," said Nick Keynes, co-founder of Tileyard North.

Amid the ongoing levelling-up agenda from politicians, Tileyard North is part of a wave of activity in Yorkshire, including EMI North in Leeds, the planned BRIT School North in Bradford and the development of the Production Park concert rehearsal space and creative facility in South Kirkby.

"We want to appeal to a slightly different audience [than Tileyard London]," said Keynes. "There's a lot more incubation that we're doing in Wakefield, and also bringing in projects from outside of the region into Wakefield. The credibility of a partner like AIM is really helpful."

Dance label Armada recently staged a writing camp at Tileyard North with producers from the region.

"A year on, it's looking really positive," said Emma Stakes, head of creative & community at Tileyard North. "We've been hosting loads of writing camps, including some from London who wanted to do them outside the capital."

Stakes wants the Tileyard development to draw some star names as clients to help accelerate the creative impact.

"I'd love a Yungblud and a Bring Me The Horizon – people that are from here that have already smashed it," she said.

A vocalist and songwriter, Stakes has worked in A&R and previously held roles at Sony Music and Syco.

"When it was announced that Tileyard was coming, I wanted to scream and shout about it," said Stakes. "My excitement is really for the emerging talent and that we're starting to level up for our country."

"It felt like an amazing opportunity," said Wynter of their subsequent collaboration. "I've known Emma for years, she's such a brilliant and forward-thinking woman who really knows the scene in Yorkshire. It was just a no-brainer."

One of the first big AIM initiatives was a roundtable last month that drew dozens of industry stakeholders from the region, including EMI North, Come Play With Me and Production Park, as well as artists, writers and producers.

AIM's interim CEO Gee Davy spoke at the event, which provided the chance to network and start to identify the support needed to help develop the sector in the region.

"There's already an ecosystem, we just want to amplify it," said Wynter. "Ultimately, more members in Yorkshire is something that we want for AIM because that means we can help grow the independent sector. We want to see these communities thrive."

"It's not North versus South – it's about collaborating and making the ecosystem thrive in the North as well," said Stakes. "EMI have set up home in Leeds, there's talk of other majors setting up their own Northern entities. It's going to make some people stay more true to their roots in this industry."

Wynter suggested that AIM's initiatives in the regions are about helping bring about practical solutions for the sector.

"If everybody says that what we need is more industry to come to Wakefield, well, AIM has a partnership with Meta and Amazon Music, so let's facilitate that," he said. "If one of the barriers is access to industry, whether it's tech companies, PPL, PRS, creative companies, whatever it is, we will facilitate that."

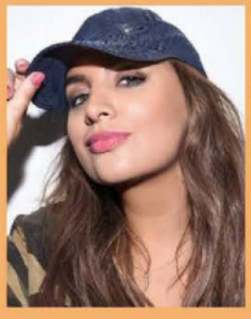
Stakes confirmed that various collaborations have since developed as a result of the roundtable. As the AIM partnership develops, she now wants to see commercial results.

"We don't want to just keep meeting up to talk about problems," she told *Music Week*. "I'd like to see more success that we can shout about because of these collaborations."

Ultimately, the initiative is part of a wider plan for the sector.

"The vision that we have at AIM is a network of ambassadors that represent each region," concluded Wynter. "A year from now, I'd like to see ambassadors in every region working together to bring cross-collaboration and economic development into each other's region."

"It's not North versus South – it's about making the ecosystem in the North thrive"
Emma Stakes, Tileyard North



"We're doubling down on our commitment to serve the regions"

Ben Wynter, AIM

Wynter is coming: *(L-R) Nick Keynes and Ben Wynter*

LIVE

Hard hitting: Billie Eilish's huge global tour will 'impact culture'

Following strong sales for new album Hit Me Hard And Soft, Wasserman agent Mike Malak looks ahead to the massive arena run including six O2 shows

BY ANDRE PAINE

Billie Eilish's agent has spoken about the star's booming live business ahead of her huge tour.

Hit Me Hard And Soft: The Tour, which is produced by Live Nation, launches in September in Quebec. The 81-date run takes in shows in North America, Australia and Europe.

Eilish's 12 UK dates in July next year include gigs at The O2 in London and four at Co-op Live in Manchester, both co-promoted by Live Nation and SJM. The UK run begins at Glasgow OVO Hydro (July 7-8), promoted with DF Concerts.

"We also did six O2s for the 2022 Happier Than Ever tour," said Wasserman Music partner Mike Malak, Eilish's agent for UK, Europe, Middle East & Africa. "I would say Billie could sell more [at the O2] but this time we chose to go wider."

The strength of her live business was underlined by the fact that all dates were announced at the same time rather than adding shows later.

Speaking about Eilish's progression, Malak said: "Billie is a very special and unique artist. Touring-wise, she always laid the foundations and played the right rooms and took the right steps. Her rise was quite exponential, but as an artist she continues to evolve over time."

Eilish will continue her partnership with environmental non-profit organisation REVERB.

Sustainability efforts will include reducing greenhouse gas pollution, as well as encouraging fans to take public transport or share cars where possible. Working with Support + Feed, an initiative founded by Eilish's mother Maggie Baird, Live Nation and Eilish's team are partnering with venues to encourage plant-based food options.

"As the tour's promoter, Live Nation works closely with each venue around the world to make sure the tour's sustainability goals are being met," said Lesley Olenik, SVP of global touring at Live Nation. "We make sure our venue partners are helping to lessen the environmental footprint of the tour through reducing or eliminating single-use plastics and diverting landfill waste with compost and recycling. We've partnered with all venues to ensure they can deliver plant-based concession offerings that are priced in line with the standard options."

A portion of the proceeds from all ticket sales will support organisations addressing the impact of food insecurity and climate change.

Eco-Villages will be set up at two locations in the main concourse of every show where fans can take part in the tour's sustainability efforts.

The album sustainability strategy included recycled vinyl, as well as Eco-mix based on offcuts and Bio-vinyl, which uses non-fossil fuel materials.

Eilish's last run of dates at The O2 included the high-profile Overheated initiative.

There are also efforts to combat touts for this tour, including mobile-only tickets, delayed delivery until two weeks prior to the show date and setting the purchase limit to four per order.

Malak described the tour as an entire team effort including management at Best Friends Music, the label teams internationally, Wasserman, Live Nation and the co-promoters.

"There are so many intricate pieces, because we want to make sure that the show is the greatest experience possible, but we also want to be responsible with sustainability," he said.

Anticipation was heightened when Eilish appeared at listening events for fans at arenas in LA and Brooklyn, while Spotify hosted an immersive experience at Lightroom in London.

Hit Me Hard And Soft amassed 500 million global streams in its first week. Although it missed out on No.1 in the US to Taylor Swift, first week consumption of 339,000 units (including 191,000 sales) for Eilish's third album was her biggest opening so far.

The LP was co-written by Eilish and Finneas, her brother and producer.

"Globally, it feels like there's real excitement," said Malak. "The whole campaign is geared up around listening to the album as a whole, and the label has done an incredible job putting all that together with Billie and the team."

Hit Me Hard And Soft (Polydor) achieved Eilish's biggest opening week in the UK with 67,111 sales (Official Charts Company).

Lunch was the most streamed song globally on Spotify and Apple Music in its first week.

Eilish headlined Glastonbury in 2022 and Reading & Leeds in 2023, but Malak suggested that her live business is even bigger in 2024.

"It feels like Billie has grown exponentially since even as recently as last summer," he said. "She's an artist that constantly impacts culture, and that really draws people into the art that both she and Finneas create together."

As well as reaching the UK summit, Hit Me Hard And Soft made No.1 in multiple countries including Australia, France and Germany.

"We are doing more dates [in Europe] than we've done there in a long time," said Malak. "It's also nice to be able to do doubles with two nights in cities like Cologne and Krakow in Poland, which she has never been to before."

While the production is under wraps, Malak said that it would be a "true representation" of the new album recorded by Eilish and Finneas.

"They never fail to surprise me when it comes to the music they're making and the way they perform," said Malak. "They are artists that are truly are on their own path."

PHOTOS: Arturo Holmes, Emma McIntyre, ABA, Getty

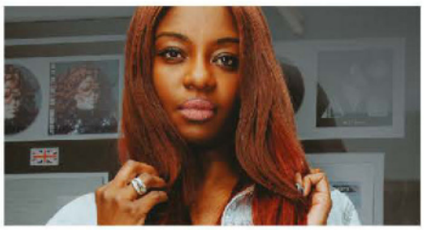
Soft launch: *Billie Eilish at the Barclays Center listening party in New York and (below) with Finneas at the Kia Forum launch event*

"Billie Eilish is a special and unique artist"
Mike Malak
Wasserman Music

FOR THE RECORD

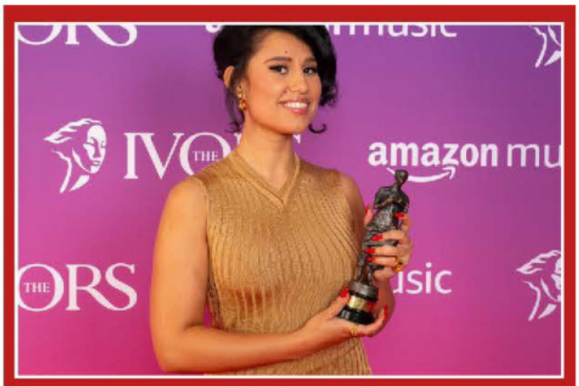
THE BIG ROLE

Joanna Kalli has been promoted to managing director of Sony Music Commercial Group, incorporating the catalogue division, Music For Nations and Masterworks. Kalli is elevated from her role as director of marketing for the UK catalogue division. She has led campaigns for acts including George Michael, The Clash and Natasha Bedingfield, who's seen a chart renaissance. "It's an exciting time to be working the repertoire of such a dynamic roster of artists," said Kalli.



THE BIG DEAL

Concord Music Publishing has signed a global agreement with UK songwriter Jin Jin (*pictured*). The deal encompasses all forthcoming works. She has collaborated with artists, songwriters and producers including Raye, David Guetta, Burna Boy, Greg Kurstin, Diplo, Bebe Rexha, Jax Jones, Loreen, WizKid and Fraser T Smith, among others. Kim Frankiewicz, EVP worldwide A&R, said: "There are few songwriters that have made as much of an impact as Jin Jin in the last decade."



THE BIG AWARDS

Raye was presented with the trophy for Songwriter Of The Year with Amazon Music at the Ivor Novello Awards. It follows Raye's record haul at the BRITs. On top of her recordings success, she has written for artists including Charli XCX, Little Mix, Beyoncé, John Legend, Ellie Goulding and Zara Larsson.

Bruce Springsteen received the Fellowship of The Ivors Academy, presented by Sir Paul McCartney.

This year's Special International Award celebrated the career and influence of Lana Del Rey, who has six UK No.1 albums.

Best Album was awarded to Black Classical Music, written by Yussef Dayes, Rocco Palladino and Charlie Stacey.

Celebrating outstanding originality in songwriting, Best Contemporary Song was claimed by Kwake Bass, Peter Bennie, Biscuit and Raven Bush of Speakers Corner Quartet alongside Kae Tempest for Geronimo Blues.

Having won the 2023 Rising Star Award, Victoria Canal's breakthrough was marked with a win for Best Song Musically And Lyrically with Black Swan, alongside Jonny Lattimer and Eg White. Master Peace won this year's Rising Star trophy.

Dave, Central Cee, Jo Caleb and Jonny Leslie together won PRS For Music Most Performed Work for their collaboration on Sprinter, the biggest song of 2023 for a UK act.

Alongside film, TV and games categories, there were special awards for Skepta (Visionary), Bernie Taupin (Outstanding Contribution) and KT Tunstall (Outstanding Song Collection).

THE BIG RESULTS

PRS For Music has reached its £1 billion goal ahead of schedule. In a landmark year, PRS For Music collected £1.08 billion in revenues in 2023, a 12% increase on 2022. The organisation paid out a record £943.6 million of royalties for songwriters, composers and music publishers. PRS For Music CEO Andrea Czapary Martin said: "My vision to ascend to a billion-pound society in royalties paid out isn't just a goal – it reflects our commitment to music creators worldwide."

THE BIG ALLIANCE

Universal Music Publishing China has signed a deal with Cheerful Music, excluding mainland China. Cheerful's London office is central to its strategy of collaboration with international talent. Grace Gao, VP, finance and operations of UMP China (*pictured, left, with Snow J, founder & CEO of Cheerful Music*), said: "Cheerful Music has an adept ability to produce music that resonates with the current trends, crafting hits that enjoy widespread popularity around the globe."

PHOTOS: Dave Hogan | Hogan Media | Shutterstock, Louise Haywood Schiefer

Nonetheless
Chart Position: No. 2
Label: Parlophone Records

TAKE A BOW

TEAM Pet Shop Boys

Management: Angela Becker/ Charlie Coletta (Becker Brown)
President: Joe Kentish (Warner Records Parlophone Label Group)
MD: Jennifer Ivory (Parlophone)
Marketing: Paul Baines (Paul Baines Marketing)
Creative: Imran Malik (Parlophone)
Digital Marketing: Connor Cockbain/Lizzie Wood (Parlophone)
Socials: Florian Schäfer/Joe Howden (Dark Arts)
Radio: Kevin McCabe (Kevin McCabe Promotions), Steve Tandy (Cop Media)
Press: Murray Chalmers/Fiona Raisbeck/George Cochran (MCPR), James Heward (Pomona)
TV: Ruth Emery (Yes Please!)
E-Commerce: Jason Rothery/Tom Jones (Warner Music)
International: Victor Aroldoss/Olivia Spring (Warner Music International)
Agent: Pete Nash (Primary Talent)

Nonetheless is more: *Pet Shop Boys*

PHOTO: Alasdair McLellan

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SPOTLIGHT

SHINING A LIGHT ON MUSIC'S BIGGEST NAMES

David Pichilingi, CEO Modern Sky UK & North America

"We're song-led not genre-led – but we've played our part in the guitar revival"

DAVID PICHILINGI, MODERN SKY

Liverpool-based **Modern Sky**'s chart run has seen Top 10s for **Jamie Webster**, **Red Rum Club**, **The Coral** and management client **Crawlers**, plus **The Lottery Winners**' No.1. Here, **David Pichilingi**, CEO, UK & North America, talks superfans, expansion and teaming with Virgin...

Modern Sky's had some strong chart results, what's behind that consistent performance?
"We work with bands and artists that know who they are and are very ambitious. We've got a great team and we know the live game, so we can spot who we would consider to be the winners coming on the outside lane very early on. Bands like The Lathums, for example; we found them when they were 17. When it comes to album campaigns, I think we're probably one of the best in the game at driving D2C for the chart week. But beyond that, we do have strategies that take us beyond the chart week as well."

How do you maximise physical sales and bundles without turning fans off?
"It's about not taking the piss out of your audience and treating them with respect. Just giving people four different colours of vinyl is an insult, really. So, when we're driving bundles, out-stores or in-stores, we always try to make it interesting. It's about sitting down with the artist and management, and really looking at paying the audience some respect, seeing what makes them tick and trying to make them happy."

What's your take on the rise of superfans?
"There are a lot of platforms out there. Right now, we use one called Openstage, which has been really beneficial and effective for us in terms of engaging those superfans. We started adopting that platform five years ago, and began to move all of those passive fans from the social media platforms onto Openstage to get them engaged. It has allowed us to really understand, at a granular level, what type of fans we have with each of the acts, particularly with artists like Jamie Webster and The Coral."

Modern Sky is a Chinese-backed label. What are the opportunities in that growing market?
"We're looking at ways that we can work with artists in the West and do collaborative pieces, so that we can help them break into China, and, vice versa, help Chinese artists break out in the West. We are looking to start another label and widen out the kind of styles and genres of music with a new team. Part of that will be opening offices in new territories like Thailand, South Korea, Japan, London and LA."

What will the focus be for that new label?
"It will be Southeast Asian repertoire out of China, South Korea and other territories, appealing primarily to a wider Asian audience. K-pop is leading the way but Japanese music is now breaking into China and other Southeast Asian territories. If you look at Squid Game and the music that came through that, there's also a wider demographic of music [beyond K-pop] that's beginning to get a foothold in the West."

Does teaming with Virgin Music allow you to retain independence with a global set-up?
"Yeah, I really like the way Virgin is [working]. I think [co-CEOs] JT [Myers] and Nat [Pastor] come to it with a relatively punk rock attitude; they want to be change agents. Vanessa [Bosåen, president Virgin Music UK] and Jim [Chancellor, Virgin Music International & Fiction MD] in the UK office are always as good as their word on everything. The team is really strong and there's a real hunger from them as well."

Have you been leading the guitar revival?
"We are song-led rather than genre-led. But I do think we've played our part in that – particularly for Northern acts. With the success of The Lathums, Jamie Webster and Brooke Combe, who is coming through now, and the resurgence of artists like The Coral and Mick Head, they are great stories and I'm very proud of that."

Finally, Jamie Webster's huge homecoming gig at Sefton Park, Liverpool takes place next month. How's he reached that level of success?
"Fan power! And he writes great songs. He's done 32,000 tickets in his hometown, he's done 10,000 tickets in Glasgow. The tours consistently sell out right across the country. So he's not a one-trick pony in terms of the UK market. He's going out to the Far East and Australia. We'll continue to look at other markets like America. We've got a hugely ambitious artist."

WORDS: Andre Paine **PHOTO:** John Johnson

START ME UP >> THE NEW COMPANIES DRIVING MUSIC'S FUTURE

Fast Trax: Sefi Carmel

NAME: SPHERETRAX
TECH: SYNC LICENSING PLATFORM

When a music sector is affected by complexity and friction, it's ripe for a tech-based solution. It's the reason why composer, producer and mixer Sefi Carmel wanted to launch a music licensing platform.

"SphereTrax addresses the pain points of creatives trying to quickly find pre-cleared tracks for their films, TV advertising and games," says Carmel.

The licensing and sync gallery simplifies the process with thousands of pre-cleared tracks available for clients including production companies in film, television, games and advertising, as well as brands, creative agencies and freelance creators.

SphereTrax uses assistive AI to power the search of its catalogue based on emotions and feelings like 'happy' or 'whimsical'.

"We allow the user to describe what they need accurately, and find it quickly," adds Carmel.

All tracks are converted to Dolby Atmos to provide an immersive sound experience as standard.

"We strongly believe that more people will be demanding it, not just when they listen to music but also for their favourite TV shows and movies from the comfort of their own homes," suggests Carmel.

The SphereTrax model allows artists and composers to keep up to 75% of their royalties from a sync. It uses blockchain technology Bitcoin SV to ensure a transparent licensing process, with payments in either cash or cryptocurrency.

"The step we believe is revolutionary for artists, though, is that as soon as we get paid, they get paid," notes Carmel.

> *"As soon as we get paid, artists get paid"*
> **SEFI CARMEL, SPHERETRAX**

The music licensing start-up recently recruited Helen Wiltshire as head of sync, sales and marketing from Warner Chappell.

"Helen brings with her a unique combination of her rich and diverse experience, combined with her sharp intuition and great passion for music," says Carmel.

A year on from the launch of the platform, SphereTrax is expanding with a label that can offer artists distribution, playlisting opportunities and registration with PROs globally.

"It exemplifies not only our ambitions as a company but also our commitment to ensure we put our artists' careers at the centre of everything that we do," concludes Carmel.

IN POD WE TRUST INSIDE THE BEST MUSIC PODCASTS

THIS MONTH: THE ART OF LONGEVITY

Hosted by: Keith Jopling
Contact: keith.jopling@gmail.com

If you can rewind back to the beginning, what was the vision behind The Art Of Longevity podcast? What do you bring to the table compared to other music podcasts out there?
"I wanted to hear artists talk about the downs as well as the ups, and how they coped with the music industry roller coaster. It's always felt like every artist interview is about promoting their new album – or they get asked about [their peak]. I thought it must be a refreshing change for artists to reflect on everything – success, failure, mistakes, luck and the nature of creativity itself. From what I can tell, that's turned out to be true. Artists really enjoy the chats and often say so at the end."

Your podcast focuses on finding out how artists have "navigated the mangle of the music industry" – what is the most common form of mangling that happens?
"The mangle' was how Elbow's Guy Garvey, who I hope will be a future guest, once described the music biz. It's that idea that after all the struggle, you have 'a hit' and are then put on a pedestal. Inevitably, you can't stay there, so you feel like a failure when sales or streams drop. You might make money, then run out of it and wonder why. Then you might get dropped or make a record that tries to please the audience, or even 'imaginary gatekeepers', as Tom Speight told me recently. For the artist, it's a minefield and a mindf**k, which is why so many just do not like the 'business' part of the music business."

> *"I wanted to hear about how artists cope with the industry"*
> **Keith Jopling**

Can you tell us about some of the best moments that have come out of your interviews so far?
"There is so much in every single conversation. I loved it when Fin Greenall (aka Fink) told me about 'the power of no', or when KT Tunstall said she felt put upon with 'all these statistics – and it's not helpful in any way'. Or when Paul Smith from Maximo Park said an artist's legend starts 'where you are from – your hometown'. The best quote is Steve Berlin from Los Lobos, who said, 'There is no formula for having a hit record; it's 60% luck, 30% talent and 10% timing.' There's your formula right there!"

You also have a book coming out – what can you tell us about it?
"On the Song Sommelier blog, I write a lot about what I'm learning from the conversations: getting dropped can be the best thing ever; a hiatus works better than being 'always on'; and that you can build your legend from the very start. It's a mix of the subtle and the bloody obvious. But the book will be an attempt to square up to all the contradictions. To the artists that pay all our wages, the industry is upside down. And the big stars – Suede, Tears For Fears, Suzanne Vega, Norah Jones – they're always so humble if you give them the space to be. In the end, the artists are wiser than all of us."

Playing the longevity game: Keith Jopling

DIGITAL DISCOURSE

Deviate Digital CEO Sammy Andrews guides you through the ever-changing tech world...

THIS MONTH:

LICENCE TO THRILL

Music fans now have a world of sonic possibility both in their palms and in their pockets. Consumption habits for an entire generation are changing – many people don't just want to listen to tracks any more, they want to interact with them, be that through DJing, editing, remixing or recontextualising them and making the music personal to each individual.

With such a plethora of digital tools freely available, the distance between artist and music lover is decreasing in many ways, but is successful monetisation doing the same? Is it right that fans can do what they want with tracks and should the industry be better at clocking and monetising the ever-increasing output?

The unstoppable rise of sped-up versions of tracks on TikTok is a good example of this behaviour change that you're all likely familiar with, given the amount of requests we get at Deviate to promote the official versions of viral hits. Some say that the phenomenon has solely flourished out of a genre called 'nightcore' – which increases the speed and pitch of tracks – but as someone who has worked in digital for over 20 years, I can tell you this method has been alive and well for decades (as has slowing tracks down) mainly designed to avoid copyright detection.

No matter the origin of this now-thriving trend, the fact that so many people are desperately trying to turn around their own official versions of tracks, after one kicks off online, tells me that we have some holes in licensing, copyright detection and enforcement that will only deepen as new trends and technology take hold. Some of you may have noticed that, even during the UMG and TikTok situation, sped-up versions of UMG tracks not only remained on the app, but grew in number.

Having official versions of those tracks makes sense in terms of ownership and revenue generation, but is the industry once again unprepared for the next generation of interactive consumption and fan output? Or are we coming at it all the wrong way? As well as releasing official versions, should we not be rolling out new licensing opportunities and seeking to fully enforce copyright with adequate monetisation of fan-made versions of tracks, in whatever form that takes?

On top of that, do we need to collectively look at new copyright legislation and procedures to protect rights-holders and artists, or is it that the current limitations of technology are letting us down? Or maybe we, as an industry, need to let down some of the barriers of restriction we have in place to protect works and instead encourage, allow, reward and monetise those efforts.

Smooth sailing: *A sped-up version of Australian group Ocean Alley's 2018 track Confidence has racked up over 800,000 TikTok video creations*

"Rights-holders have a duty to fully understand, embrace and monetise new innovations in a way that feels comfortable for artists"

SAMMY ANDREWS
DEVIATE DIGITAL

If you hop on any search engine and ask it to find an app to change the music speed, pitch or separate tracks into stems, you will find lots of very sophisticated options at the click of a button. Nearly all can be used on smartphones as well as on desktop computers. You'll also find many apps to let you become a DJ, and every day you'll find more sophisticated AI music generation and voice swap applications that are, quite frankly, incredible with their output compared to just a few short months ago. Those of you not familiar with the Instagram account @there_i_ruined_it would do well to have a peek to see what current human input paired with AI voice modelling can do.

While something like ripping samples is absolutely nothing new, the ease of access to tools that allow fans to interact with music in many different ways is something we have never seen before at such scale and sophistication. It is something the business as a whole seems to shy away from talking about, outside of the raging AI or rate-per-stream debates.

How will copyright keep up with this derivative content? I asked legendary music and tech lawyer Cliff Fluet, a partner at Lewis Silkin and managing director at Eleven Advisory, who has been working in this space for decades, for his thoughts.

"New genres have been built on new creators experimenting with technology, from scratching, to mixing, to sampling and creating an entire new paradigm for hip-hop and electronic music," he said. "From ringtones to sped-up tracks to voice clones, the human urge to personalise, share and adapt is only being fed by technology and represents a greater opportunity than threat for the music industry. Whilst I'm always asked if copyright is the problem, I always reply that 'licensing is the answer.' It respects, recognises and rewards rights-owners and always makes more money for all."

Fluet is not wrong. If we are to truly embrace – as well as monetise – the future, it is going to require many solutions and licensing options.

If the music business is unable to get across emerging and thriving technology and trends fully, we run the risk of allowing the proverbial horse to bolt. AI is no longer something that is on the horizon – it is already planted firmly on our lawns. We must work together to ensure the future is bright for our human creatives and, hopefully, their legions of fans – both new and old – who may be reintroduced to music in a whole different way owing to new technology.

Rights-holders have a duty to fully understand, embrace and monetise these innovations in a way that feels comfortable for artists. And while peak lean-back listening may be in full swing in some places, if I were a betting woman, I'd quite fancy the odds on some heavy 'lean in' explosions in the future, too.

PHOTOS: Paul Harries, Kane Lehanneur

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

@__abisola I thought succulents were easy going plants, WTH man ***(Abisola Oke, August) Tuesday, May 7***

@jzux Quitting my job to focus on being annoying with my friends ***(Jules Zucker, music supervisor) Tuesday, May 21***

@JamesBlunt Damn – my gig in Helsinki on July 7 has been cancelled because the arena is kaput. Anyone need a wedding singer that weekend? ***(James Blunt, artist) Tuesday, May 7***

@Santandave1 Okay so imma be real my dream is to start a blues band I am practising everyday check back to this tweet in five years ***(Dave, artist) Tuesday, March 7***

@StephUwak TBH, it's easy to be ambitious, it's another thing to actually do the work. ***(Stephanie Achigbu, TikTok) Tuesday, May 21***

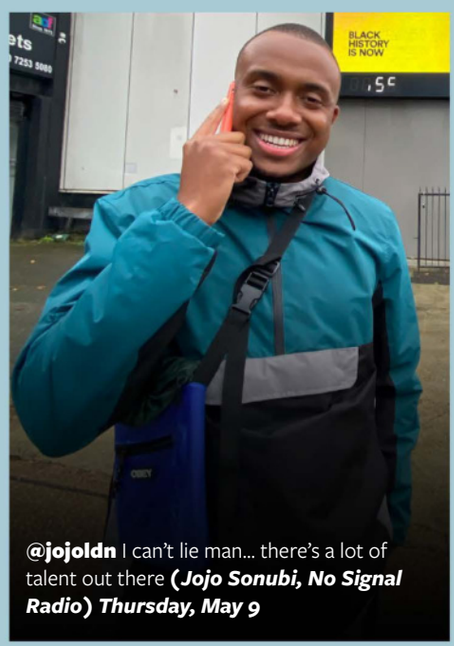
@jnessr Billie Eilish you will always be famous ***(Jenessa Williams, journalist) Friday, May 17***

@JamesParrish I invariably spend a small chunk of the working week putting capital letters into entire Q&As written in lower case. That's what a PR really does. ***(James Parrish, Prescription PR) Wednesday, May 1***

@niall_mdoherty I always liked how Steve Albini was a producer for hire but in the A-Team sense, get in there, fuck shit up and then move onto the next mission. ***(Niall Doherty, journalist) Wednesday, May 22***

@SabrinaAnnLynn I THOUGHT Y'ALL DRANK TEA OMG THANK YOU!!!!!!!!! ***(Sabrina Carpenter, artist) Friday, May 3***

#1 TWEET



@jojoldn I can't lie man... there's a lot of talent out there ***(Jojo Sonubi, No Signal Radio) Thursday, May 9***

@townsendyesmate Bank holiday Mondays are so good because every day feels like we are fast-forwarding the working week. It seriously feels like Tuesday right now, but it's literally Wednesday. How good is that? It's basically Friday at this point, time to start winding down. Let's get it. ***(Mike Townsend, ADA) Wednesday, May 8***

@rachelchinourir I've met some amazing songwriters and musicians today at the Ivors, and have had some bonkers experiences (I was literally in Belgium this morning) and I have to thank you ALL for the support and love that has got me into these spaces and situations! Darlings for life!! ***(Rachel Chinouriri, artist) Thursday, May 23***

@mmtowns NGL the sheer relief of not having to work at a news org for a general election for the first time in my adult life is running through me like big old shot of tequila right now ***(Megan Townsend, MixMag) Wednesday, May 22***

@hayleymartine Listen if I was in a position of power I would simply make whistling in public a criminal offence ***(Hayley Smith, TikTok) Wednesday, May 22***

@JulieAdenuga I know it's easy to say without proof but I'm amazing at parallel parking. ***(Julie Adenuga, broadcaster) Saturday, May 11***

RISING STAR

Meet the industry's brightest new talents...

Shannon Carragher

Editor – indie, rock & alternative, Spotify

@shancarragher

You used to work at independent distributors Caroline and Ditto. What made you feel Spotify was the right place to continue to spotlight indie acts?

"Spotify has always been a dream company for me, as growing up I relied heavily on [the platform's] Discover Weekly and playlists to find music. Working in distribution during the rise of streaming, my role focused on DSP relationships for independent artists and I learnt about deals, campaigns and labels. Fostering connections is at the heart of my role now, and although curating playlists is an important part of what we do, our influence extends far beyond that, allowing us to impact artists on a large scale. For example, finding an indie artist with a small following one day and discussing them with our Global Curation Groups the next is a huge opportunity I haven't had before."

Now that audiences can become tastemakers and genres have become more fluid, do indie, rock and alternative hold as much weight as they used to?

"The fluidity of genres is positive; we don't need to put artists into boxes any more. But indie and alternative music will always be influential because their audiences value artistry and are always eager to know what's pushing the boundaries. Our playlists, such as The Indie List, reflect that, and recently we updated our Alternative Hub to show how the genre isn't rooted in one sound. People are also betting on bands again, with The Last Dinner Party and Wet Leg both going from Hot New Bands to the Hot Hits UK playlist and, more recently, Good Neighbours [featuring in] Today's Top Hits. It's exciting."

Right now, many in the business are talking about how tough it is to break new acts. Do you think there is enough support for independent artists?

"It's tough when cornerstones for indie artists, like grassroots venues, are under strain. Independent acts need reliable pathways beyond just one medium. But I am hopeful for the future. At Spotify, our Fresh Finds programme is dedicated to supporting indie artists early in their careers, and our emerging artist programme Radar shares that goal, so it all bleeds into the decisions we make as a team."

When it comes to fully showing an artist's craft, where do you stand on the playlists vs albums argument?

"There is immense value in both and they shouldn't be compared. Playlists bring multiple artists together to provide a world you can step into, and albums are a canvas for artists to express themselves and leave a lasting mark. Our alternative playlist Misfits 2.0 shows how a community can be built around playlists – we've seen some of the biggest artists collaborate in it, and champion and tour with artists we've discovered."

Finally, you work on Spotify's Glow and Equal brands, which elevate the queer community and women in music. How vital are programmes like these?

"Equity and representation are essential for the industry to thrive, and these programmes allow us to allocate resources, attract listeners and create opportunities for communities who are marginalised. As an industry, we have so much data that we can use to highlight the areas that need attention, so it's about proactive action. Equity is a complex, global issue that transcends beyond music, but music has the power to be a significant force for driving change. There has been some progress, but there's a long way to go."

RECOMMENDED TRACK: Fontaines DC – Starburster

"Curating playlists is an important part of what we do, but our influence extends far beyond that"
SHANNON CARRAGHER

INTERVIEW: Miranda Bardsley

ARE YOU A RISING STAR? Under 30? Making a name for yourself? Email Miranda Bardsley at miranda.bardsley@futurenet.com to appear here...

TINY HABITS

From college karaoke to going viral, folk-pop trio Tiny Habits have mesmerised audiences worldwide with their harmonies. Here, they go deep on their debut album, touring and duetting with the stars...

Right now, Tiny Habits are one of the most hotly tipped new bands out there. And to think, we owe it all to some outdated bathroom furnishings. Flashback to 2021, and Cinya Khan is trying to find out how to use the toilet paper holder in her dorm's bathroom at Berklee College Of Music in Boston. She posts about it on her Instagram story to see if anyone can help, and a student in the year below her, Maya Rae, an admirer of Khan's music posts, replies, saying that she didn't know how they worked either.

"Cinya had no idea who I was; she didn't even follow me back on Instagram but I thought she was an amazing singer, I was just a fan," Rae laughs. "So I piped up and asked her to let me know how to use it if she figured it out."

Rae was in her first year of Berklee at the time, and – also through Instagram – had bonded with fellow freshman Judah Mayowa.

"It was during Covid, so a lot of the way people made friends during that time was online," she explains. "As soon as we could meet up with people in the dorm building, I messaged Judah saying, 'Hey, I'd love to sing with you!'"

Soon after, the two were sitting on her dorm room floor doing karaoke – "It was hilarious, we were like, 'Oh my God, this is so good...'" Rae smiles.

And not too long after, the duo became a trio.

"Cinya and I had become sort of internet friends after she'd sent me this whole vlog on how to use that weird old bathroom contraption, so one day I messaged her and was like, 'Hey, my friend is here, we're both singers and we're singing together if you want to come over,'" Rae recalls. "She was like, 'Okay', made her way to my room and we all sang Kacey Musgraves together."

Fast forward to 2024 and Tiny Habits have duetted with the country-pop star herself – a surreal moment to say the least.

"It's crazy!" grins Mayowa. "My best friend and I used to drive around and listen to her, so when she came to our Nashville show on tour I introduced them, and that really warmed my heart."

Tiny Habits released their debut EP, Tiny Things, in April 2023, a year that saw them joining Gracie Abrams on her US tour and supporting Noah Kahan in Europe, having already sung with Lizzy McAlpine at her Tiny Desk Concert in 2022. This year, they have completed their first headline tours in the US and across Europe.

"I cry at basically every show," sighs Rae. "I'm just processing the fact that we've reached so many people."

"A show we did in Melbourne while we were with Gracie was so special," Khan adds.

"We'd never been there before and it was packed with people who knew our songs," Rae agrees. "It was crazy!"

Last month, Tiny Habits released debut album All For Something – a record that shines light on each member's individual voice, as well as their dovetailing harmonies, all while exploring themes like love, friendship and insecurity on its 12 tracks. It is a deeply personal project that offers listeners a glimpse at how close the trio behind it are.

"We're best friends," says Mayowa. "So it's easy for us to be vulnerable in our writing – it's never a surprise what we're feeling, because we talk about everything."

As well as welcoming in a new era for the group, the album also enabled a different, slower way of working.

"We did the EP in about two weeks," Khan explains. "But with this album, we had the time to listen to the songs over and over, which was so important."

"We'd also had a trial period in LA with our producer, Tony Berg [Phoebe Bridgers, Boygenius], before we recorded," she adds. "We worked on all the songs, chords, arrangements, and talked about what the tracks were about."

For Tiny Habits, a debut album being the next step in their journey made sense ("It's satisfying having a body of work that is ours," says Rae), despite some early hesitation when it came to sharing their songs with the world.

"We've struggled bridging the gap between posting covers on TikTok and our original music," Khan says. "It felt daunting because we didn't know how people would react to it, but it's something we needed to do for ourselves."

Indeed, Tiny Habits have been growing an online following since they started posting videos of their harmonising on social media back at Berklee.

"When we started posting, it was just fun," Mayowa says. "We were posting the same thing to all of our accounts until we were like, 'This is stupid, let's make one together.' That was the moment it was like, 'OK, we're a band.'"

Almost immediately, thousands of new fans were rushing to their page – and they now have over 300,000 followers on both TikTok and Instagram.

"From the jump, people were noticing us," reflects Rae. "But we did a cover of Fleetwood Mac's Landslide seven or so months in, which did *really* well."

"After that video I was like, 'Holy...!' But never so overwhelmed that I wasn't aware of how cool it was," adds Mayowa.

But it wasn't until the group started performing that those numbers felt real.

"We played one of our first shows in Rockwood in New York where 200 people or so came," says Khan. "When we went on stage, people were screaming our names. We were like, 'How do you know us?!'"

Although their career took off online, Tiny Habits are still getting to grips with how they feel about social media.

"I sometimes feel disheartened," says Khan, pausing to think. "I love seeing people make music and go viral, but there's a difference between artists wanting a platform and people posting things just to blow up. It's confusing though, because people can express themselves however they want."

"Social media is, in general, the most exhausting part for us," Mayowa admits. "But it is rewarding and it's the reason we've been able to connect with so many people."

Tiny Habits are currently signed to independent label Mom+Pop, having met them during the making of the album.

"We'd been shopping around, looking for what deal suited us best," says Rae. "Mom+Pop ticked every box, they loved what we were making and we have a lot of creative leeway."

As for a major deal down the line, who knows? Whatever happens, the trio will always put their musical freedom first.

"Creative liberty is at the forefront of everything we do, it's not something we'd ever compromise on," affirms Khan.

And for now, Tiny Habits are far more excited about where their new project could take them next.

"I hope this album opens doors for us to keep meeting people we admire," Rae concludes, as Mayowa and Khan nod in agreement. "With everything we've released so far, we've been able to do that – so let's go!" **MIRANDA BARDSLEY**

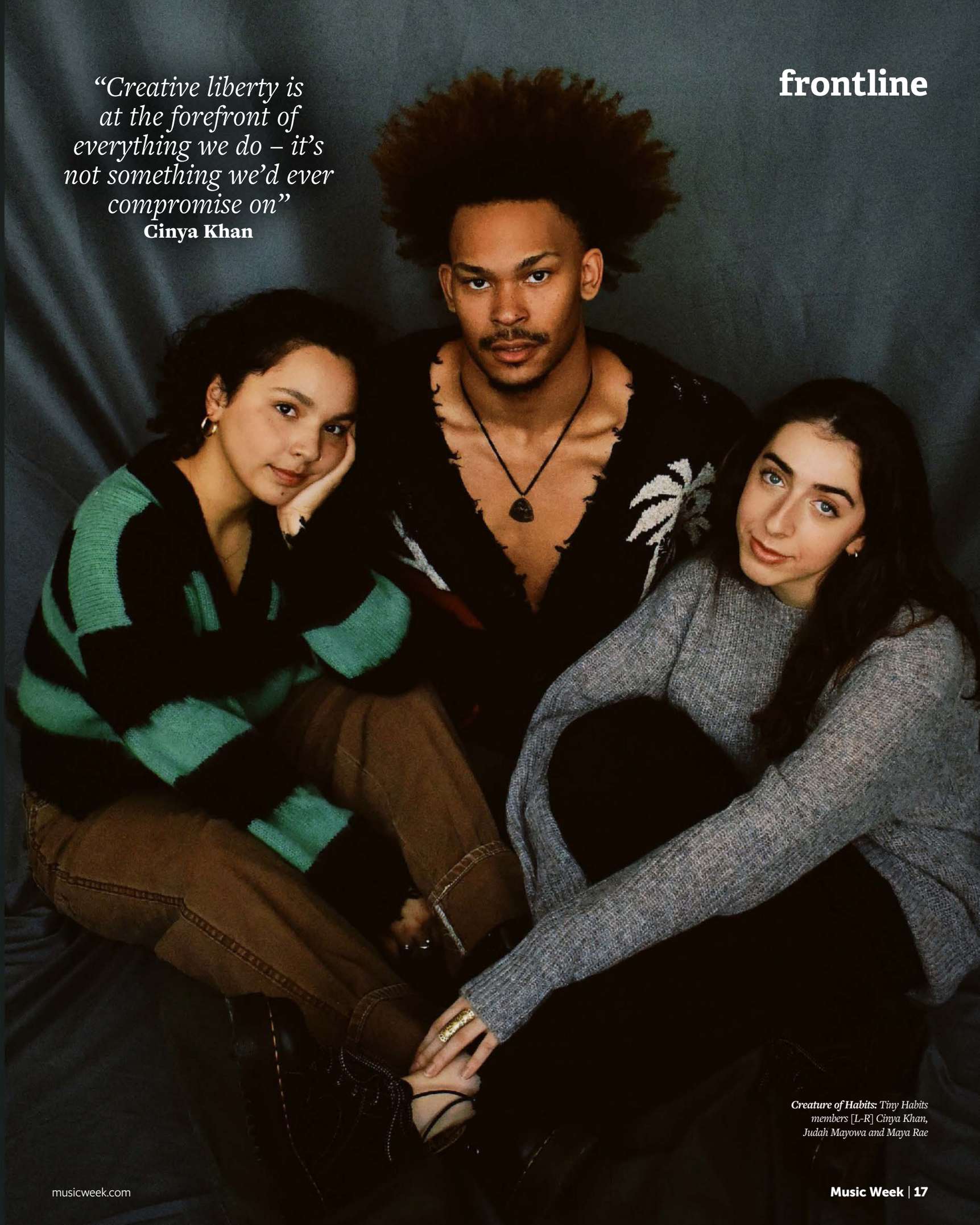
ESSENTIAL INFO

RELEASE: All For Something (out now)
LABEL: Mom+Pop
MANAGEMENT: Steve Macklam, Macklam Feldman Management
WHAT THE TEAM SAYS:

Thaddeus Rudd, co-owner & co-president, Mom+Pop: "We believe that Tiny Habits, with their compelling backstory and unique blend of ingenious harmonies and personal lyrics, make music that is unique to their generation of artists. Their album All For Something will see them growing a global fanbase over the next year, and we are thrilled to be part of that growth."

PHOTO: Shervin Lainez

"Creative liberty is at the forefront of everything we do – it's not something we'd ever compromise on"
Cinya Khan



Creature of Habits: *Tiny Habits members [L-R] Cinya Khan, Judah Mayowa and Maya Rae*

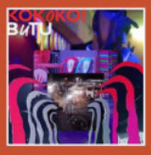
THE PLAYLIST

NORMANI
Candy Paint (RCA)
More than five years after she tweeted "I have my album title y'all", Normani's debut is finally upon us. For her legion of fans, the wait was surely worth it. While this lead single evokes nostalgia for a golden age of R&B, it gives the genre a hard shove into the future via shifting production and smart lyrics.
Contact: Lisa-Marie Boateng
lisa-marie.boateng@sonymusic.com

HARD-FI
Don't Go Making Plans (Ignition)
Inspired to make new music after reuniting to tour in 2022, Hard-Fi pick up precisely where they left off in their heyday with their first single in 10 years. Written in response to the government's Public Order Act, Don't Go Making Plans is a buzzing protest anthem from the Staines outfit.
Contact: Ant Giannaccini
anthony@mbcpr.com

GRACIE ABRAMS
Risk (Polydor)
Gracie Abrams was shortlisted for Best New Artist at the Grammys off the back of her debut album, so its follow-up arrives with the weight of expectation. Lead single Risk feels light and airy thanks to its acoustic guitar riff, but the raw emotion in the LA singer's lyrics ('*I feel like I could die/'Cause you're not here*') offers a thrilling contrast.
Contact: Matthew Avento
matthew.avento@ledecompany.com

ROMY
Always Forever (Young)
Still surfing the waves created by last year's debut solo album, Romy has released an instant follow-up in the form of Always Forever. Her latest hook up with Fred Again.. delivers another dose of loved-up club music, this time featuring an interpolation of Donna Lewis' 1996 hit I Love You Always Forever.
Contact: Jon Wilkinson
jonwilkinson@xlrecordings.com



KOKOKO!
Mokili (Transgressive)
Now comprising core duo Xavier Thomas, aka Débruit, and Makara Bianko, Kokoko! maintain their infectious appeal on second record Butu, which is inspired by the nightlife in Congolese city Kinshasa. The album's bubbling rhythms and magpie approach to genre make it a 2024 essential.
Contact: Natalie Quesnel
natalie@muvvapr.com

RAVEENA
Lucky (Empire)
Out this month, Where Butterflies Go In The Rain is Raveena's third album and the fullest illustration yet of her vision for pop. The Indian-American singer's musical world is one of delicate beauty, where patient melodies combine with thoughtful lyrics. Lucky, an ode to femininity, is a wash of pop, R&B and spaced-out atmosphere.
Contact: Chris Cuff
chris.cuff@goodmachinepr.com

LOLA YOUNG
Messy (Day One/Island)
It was February 2020, in her first interview with *Music Week*, that Lola Young offered the following appraisal of how to cut through: "You can be honest and raw, but you have to be relatable otherwise no one will give a shit." The South Londoner certainly delivers on This Wasn't Meant For You Anyway. Out this month, it's technically her second album, but she describes it as "my first born child and a fuck you to all my exes". Lilting highlight Messy sees Young let rip with a string of post break-up couplets about being left to wait outside the station in the freezing cold and being told she's '*too messy*' and then '*too fucking clean*'. It's funny, addictive and, like the rest of the record, enriched by her effortless vocal.
Contact: Frankie Manolo
frankie@cherrycreate.com

Hear **THE PLAYLIST** at spotify.com/user/musicweek

TASTE MAKERS

The industry's favourite new sounds

DJ Day Day, BBC Radio 1Xtra

KWN – EYES WIDE OPEN

An artist who has definitely caught my attention over the last year is Kwn (pronounced kay-wuhn), a singer, rapper, writer and producer from Walthamstow in London.

Her music has a dreamy vibe that pulls from trap, soul and R&B influences. I truly believe she's a superstar in the making, and she writes these relatable, soothing and vulnerable songs that draw you into her artistic universe every time you listen.

A true creative talent, she produces most, if not all, of her own music, pouring her thoughts, stories and experiences into every track. Her sound is both timeless and new.

Known for her signature autotuned style, one of her recent releases, Lord I've Tried, steps away from that, proving her versatility and true vocals behind the effects. Recently though, I've had her latest track Eyes Wide Open on repeat, and have supported it a lot on my show, too.

I haven't seen her perform live yet, but I can't wait to see how her unique style translates. Kwn is an artist who's going to blow up *big* and has international potential, one hundred per cent.

MAKING WAVES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST BRAND NEW ACT

BERLIOZ

The independent house-jazz sensation introduces us to his art-inspired world of music...

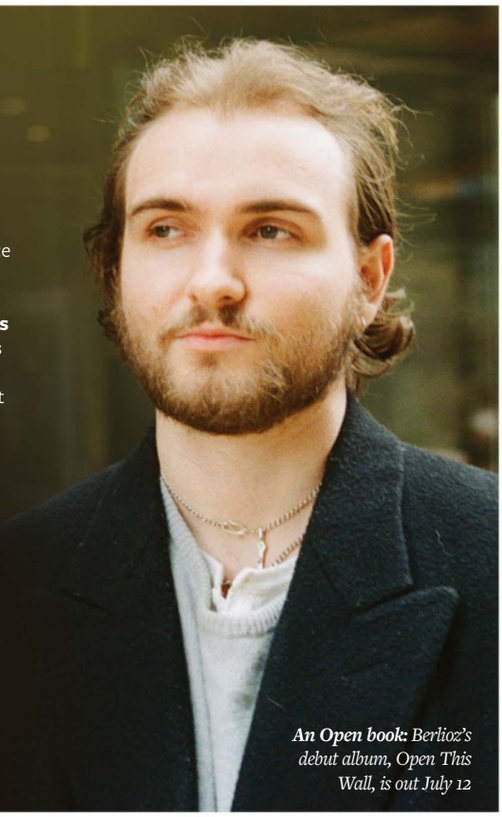
KEY TRACK: Joycelyn's Dance
LABEL: Independent
MANAGEMENT: Self-managed
INSTAGRAM: @thisisberlioz

You've used the phrase 'If Matisse made house music' to describe Berlioz. How important is visual art in your music?
"With Berlioz, art and music have always been meshed. I'd made music before and when I started this new project I wanted the visual elements to be just as important as the music, which is why I've worked with my friend Pat Thomas [who designs the artwork for Berlioz's releases] to go through visual ideas of what Berlioz is. I'm not an art buff, but I think there's this feeling from painters like Matisse and the impressionists that's so free, and I hope my style can be compared to that."

The single Joycelyn's Dance, from your upcoming record Open This Wall, shares its name with your wife. What inspired it?
"We were into Twin Peaks, and I just think the series' composer Angelo Badalamenti was a genius with emotion and setting scenes, which is what my project is about – creating a soundtrack you can escape to. Audrey's Dance in Twin Peaks is one of those magical, surreal moments, so that's why I called it Joycelyn's Dance – I wanted to do my own thing from that."

You have over two million monthly Spotify listeners and have been touring abroad this year. What does it feel like to have reached that level?
"It's surreal. Until you do a show, you can't picture what it means to have that many people listening to your music. I'd been making music for a long time before Berlioz, and it's so special knowing people want to hear what you create. There are elements that have been harder to get to grips with, like touring, but if you focus on performing for people who seem to connect with it, that's amazing."

You are currently releasing independently and are self-managed. Could that change in the future?
"I think something must have gone really wrong if that changes; a big part of Berlioz is being independent. It's not like I don't want help, but I find so much freedom in having that control. I'm sure it's nice knowing that, with a manager and label, you can ignore something for two weeks and somebody might get to it for you, which I can't do – but apart from that, it's great!"



An Open book: *Berlioz's debut album, Open This Wall, is out July 12*

INTERVIEW: Miranda Bardsley **PHOTO:** Charlie Millar

SYNC STORY

Life Sabers: *The art for the Daft Punk x Beat Saber VR game and [inset] Daft Punk*

BEAT SABER/DAFT PUNK

BY MIRANDA BARDSLEY

For this month's Sync Story, we enter the world of virtual reality with Daft Punk's spot in the VR game Beat Saber.

A conversation between Warner Music and Meta began in January 2022 to align the companies' initial collaboration with the 25th anniversary of the electronic duo's debut album, Homework, which, upon its release in 1997, went to No.8 in the UK albums chart and has since racked up a total of 391,406 sales (according to Official Charts Company data). Two years later, the project has been brought to life.

The VR game features eight Warner Music masters which can accompany the games of Beat Saber's six million users, including tracks such as Around The World, One More Time, Da Funk/Daftendirekt and Harder, Faster, Better, Stronger, among others. The sync has also brought live music to Beat Saber for the first time ever, with The Prime Time Of Your Life/The Brainwasher/Rollin'/Alive (Live 2007) from Daft Punk's Alive 2007 live show being featured.

Two Sony Music Entertainment tracks are also included in the Daft Punk pack: Get Lucky featuring Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers and Lose Yourself To Dance, also featuring Williams.

Rob Vicars, creative sync manager at Warner Music, explains why the sync spot was so effective and highlights the importance of timing when it comes to effective collaborations such as this.

"We always believed there was a genuine and authentic fit between Daft Punk and Beat Saber; it just needed to be at the right time," he says. "So, in 2022 when we were brainstorming for the 25th anniversary of Homework and Alive 1997, it felt like the perfect time to push on our relationship with Meta to make it happen."

"We were thoughtful about what the experience would be for fans and that's why it's the first Beat Saber pack to include live versions of songs and graphics during the game," he continues. "It also showcases Daft Punk's helmet, which isn't a million miles away from what the Meta Quest VR headset looks like, so it was clearly meant to be!"

Spot: In-game expansion pack for VR rhythm game Beat Saber
Title: Daft Punk x Beat Saber
Artist: Daft Punk
Master: WMG, SME
Publishers: Concord, Warner Chappell Music, Downtown Music Publishing, Reach Global, Sony Music Publishing, Universal Music Publishing Group
Production company: Beat Games
Distributed by: Meta
Air Date: 05.03.24

"We always believed there was a genuine and authentic fit between Daft Punk and Beat Saber; it just needed to be at the right time"
Rob Vicars, Warner Music

PHOTO: Maud Bernos

WANT TO GET YOUR SYNC STORY IN MUSIC WEEK?
Email Miranda Bardsley at miranda.bardsley@futurenet.com for details.

KEY RELEASES

The essential albums heading your way...

JUNE 21

Dolly Parton Petty Country: A Country Music Celebration Of Tom Petty Big Machine
Avril Lavigne Greatest Hits Legacy (Sony)
Daryl Hall D United Artists
Don Toliver Hardstone Psycho (Out June 16) Atlantic
Ed Sheeran X – 10th Anniversary Atlantic
Jethro Tull Bursting Out (Live): Steven Wilson Remix Parlophone
Kate Nash 9 Sad Symphonies Kill Rock Stars
Kittie Fire Sumerian
Rich Ruth Water Still Flows Third Man
Robert Vincent Barriers Thirty Tigers
The Dangerous Summer Gravity Rude
The Mysterines Afraid Of Tomorrows Fiction
The Story So Far I Want To Disappear Pure Noise

JUNE 28

Anvil One And Only AFM

Camila Cabello C,XOXO Geffen/Interscope
Frances Forever Lockjaw Mom + Pop
Goodbye June Deep In Trouble Goodbye June
Headie One The Last One Sony
Imagine Dragons Loom Kidinakorner/Interscope
Johnny Cash Songwriter EMI
Kyle Daniel Kentucky Gold Snakefarm
Lupe Fiasco Samurai 1st&15th/Thirty Tigers
Neil Young & Crazy Horse Early Daze Reprise
Nothing More Carnal Better Noise
Oh Hiroshima All Things Shining Pelagic
Omar Apollo God Said No Warner
Scene Queen Hot Singles In Your Area Hopeless
Shania Twain Greatest Hits Summer Tour Edition 2024 – Vinyl Mercury
Sour Widows Revival Of A Friend Exploding In Sound
Stephen Pastel & Gavin Thomson This Is Memorial Device Geographic
The Organ Grab That Gun/Thieves – 20th Anniv. LP set 604
The Warning Keep Me Fed Republic
Yes Fragile – Super Deluxe Rhino

JULY 5

Enter Shikari Dancing On The Frontline So/Silva Screen
Kasabian Happenings Columbia

JULY 12

Bashy Being Poor Is Expensive Bish Bash Bosh
Cassadee Pope Hereditary Awake
Cat Burns Early Twenties Since '93/RCA
Cigarettes After Sex X's Partisan
Font Strange Burden Acrophase
Future Utopia Django's High 70Hz/The Orchard
John Lennon Mind Games – Ultimate Collection Universal
Marc Almond I'm Not Anyone BMG
Mr Big Ten Frontiers
Remi Wolf Big Ideas EMI
Stone Fear Life For A Lifetime Polydor
The Rolling Stones Voodoo Lounge – 30th Anniv. Polydor
Travis LA Times BMG

BEABADOOBEE
This Is How Tomorow Moves is out August 16 via Dirty Hit

PHOTO: Jules Moskovtchenko

JULY 19

Stone Broken Remedy 7hz Rec.
Deep Purple 1 EarMusic
Duran Duran Duran Duran/Rio/Seven And The Ragged Tiger/Notorious/Big Thing – Reissue Warner
Glass Animals I Love You So F***ing Much Polydor
Gorgon City Reverie Positiva/Realm
Griff Vertigo Warner
Highly Suspect As Above, So Below Roadrunner/300/Elektra
Jaws The Shark Wasteland SO
Los Campesinos! All Hell Heart Swells
Soft Play Heavy Jelly BMG

JULY 26

Alex Izenberg Alex Izenberg & The Exiles Weird World/Domino
Beastie Boys Ill Communication (30th Anniversary) Grand Royal/Capitol/UME
Empire Of The Sun Ask That God EMI
Humanist On The Edge Of A Lost & Lonely World Bella Union
Joshua Bassett The Golden Years Warner
Kenzie Biting My Tongue Hollywood
Painted Shield Painted Shield 3 Loosegroove
Sam Tompkins Hi, My Name Is Insecure Island

AUGUST 2

86TVs 86TVs Parlophone
Blue Pills Birthday BMG
Pixey Million Dollar Baby Chess Club
Polo G Hood Poet Columbia
Swami John Reis All Of This Awaits You BMG

AUGUST 9

Amos Lee Transmissions Hoagiemouth/Thirty Tigers
Niki Buzz 88Rising
Twin Atlantic Meltdown Staple Diet
Will Young Light It Up BMG

AUGUST 16

Beabadoobee This Is How Tomorrow Moves Dirty Hit
Hamish Hawk A Firmer Hand SO/Silva Screen
Morgan Wade Obsessed LadyLike/Sony Nashville
The Script Satellites BMG
Wishy Triple Seven Winspear
Yours Truly Toxic UNFD

KID BOOKIE
Songs For The Living/Songs For The Dead is out September 13 via Marshall

PHOTO: Paul Harries

AUGUST 23

Atlas Genius End Of The Tunnel Frogs Head
Cassyette This World Fucking Sucks 23 Rec.

Fontaines DC Romance XL
Kishi Bashi Kantos Joyful Noise

AUGUST 30

Awolnation The Phantom Five Two Twenty Five Music
Galliano Halfway Somewhere Brownswood
Jon Hopkins Ritual Domino
Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds Wild God Bad Seed/Play It Again Sam
Oasis Definitely Maybe – 30th Anniversary Big Brother
Paris Paloma Cacophony Nettwerk
Wunderhorse Midas Communion
Zedd Telos Interscope

SEPTEMBER 6

Boston Manor Sundiver SharpTone
David Gilmour Luck & Strange Sony
Fat Dog Woof Domino
Finish Ticket Echo Afternoon Better Noise
Hinds Viva Hinds Lucky Number
Natasha Bedingfield Unwritten – 20th Anniversary Sony
The The Ensoulment EarMusic

SEPTEMBER 13

Kid Bookie Songs For The Living/Songs For The Dead Marshall

London Grammar The Greatest Love Ministry Of Sound
Porches Shirt Domino
Snow Patrol The Forest Is The Path Polydor
Tindersticks Soft Tissue City Slang

SEPTEMBER 20

Jake Bugg A Modern Day Distraction RCA
Nathan Evans 1994 Electrola/EMI
Nightwish Yesterwynde Nuclear Blast

SEPTEMBER 27

Maxïmo Park Stream Of Life Lower Third/PIAS
Shed Seven Liquid Gold Cooking Vinyl

OCTOBER 11

James Blunt Back To Bedlam – 20th Anniversary Atlantic

Please email any key releases information to isabelle.nesmon@futurenet.com
A more extensive release schedule is available in The new music section on musicweek.com

Sister act: *The Warning (L-R) Alejandra, Paulina and Daniela Villarreal, [inset] the artwork for Keep Me Fed, out June 28 via LAVA/Republic Records*

INCOMING

Fresh from their sold-out UK headline tour, Mexican trio **The Warning** unleash their brilliant fourth album, **Keep Me Fed**, this month. Here, guitarist/vocalist **Daniela Villarreal** talks rock, life on the road and high-fiving **Dave Grohl**...

The Warning first came to the world's attention in 2014 when your cover of Metallica's Enter Sandman blew up, all while the three of you were aged between nine and 14. Artists go viral all the time and then disappear, so what did you do right to turn that moment into a lasting career?

"We're so grateful that happened. We were just kids, I don't even think we grasped what 'virality' was. Our parents really took care of us – they knew that everything was happening all at once, and that everyone wanted a piece. They decided that what was important was for us to figure out what *we* wanted to do musically. Going viral never felt limiting, but what we did have to escape from a little bit was that we were known as, 'The young girls who rocked and played classic songs.' We were like, 'How do we push people to listen to *our* music?' That's what we had to work on. With Keep Me Fed, we wanted to sound bigger than ever – we were thinking with our live shows in mind."

To that end, within a very quick space of time you've gone from small shows to playing stadiums with Foo Fighters and Muse. How did you psych yourself up to play such huge shows so early in your career?

"We were hella nervous, but there was also a very big sense of pride because we were doing it in Mexico City. We took it as, 'We're welcoming the Foo Fighters onto the stage in our country and preparing our people to enjoy their show.' Dave Grohl gave us a mean high five. I was almost blown away by it, like, 'Oh my God, the power in that man!' He's awesome."

Hell You Call A Dream was influenced by your experiences on tour – what were you drawing on in particular?

"Most of the album is about what we have been living through in the past year or two. It's a delicate subject, because touring is the dream, but it is very tough. A lot of artists can relate to this: when the pandemic was over, everyone was rushing into all the tours they could, instead of pacing everything. And for us, if we're going over to Europe, we have to make that trip count. Even if it's going to be a hellish tour, you really have to put the work in. It's all about finding the little things that you can enjoy while you're not sleeping well and eating sandwiches for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You have to give your best at every show and your body will leave you hanging, like, 'Nope, not today!' It's all about listening to your body."

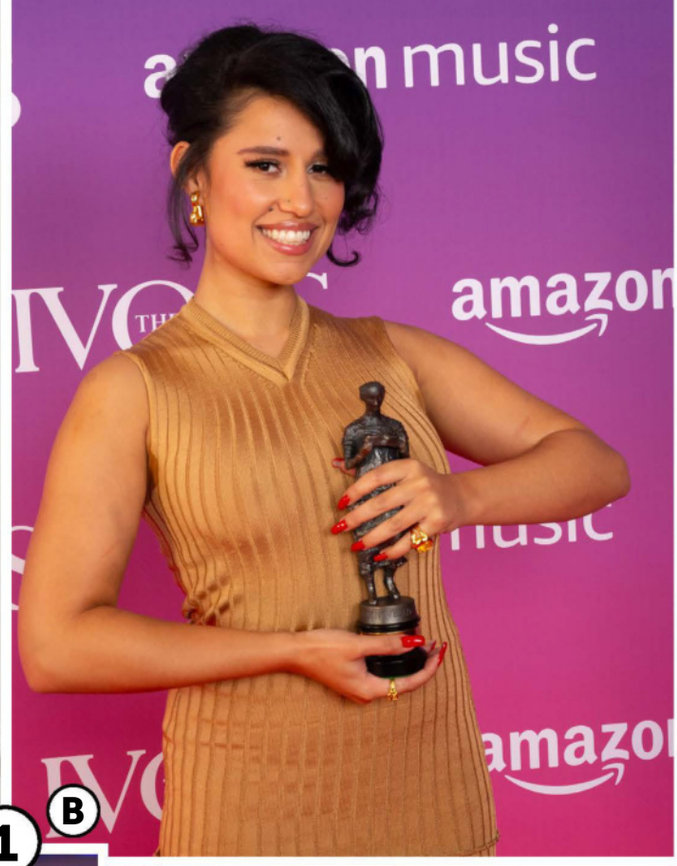
Qué Más Quieres is about how "doors have opened for Mexican women in rock". Which doors were previously closed, specifically?

"More than anything, we've seen genuine surprise from people saying, 'Rock? In Mexico?!' And you're like, 'Of course!' We like to spread the word that this is a thing. Every stage we step on, we're super-proud to represent our country, women in Mexico and rock. That's the biggest thing for us. In England, we played Qué Más Quieres on our headline tour and people were screaming it back at us at the top of their lungs. That was just amazing. It was a very emotional moment for us."

"We're super-proud to represent both rock and women in Mexico"

Daniela Villarreal, The Warning

INTERVIEW: George Garner **PHOTO:** Marco Reynoso

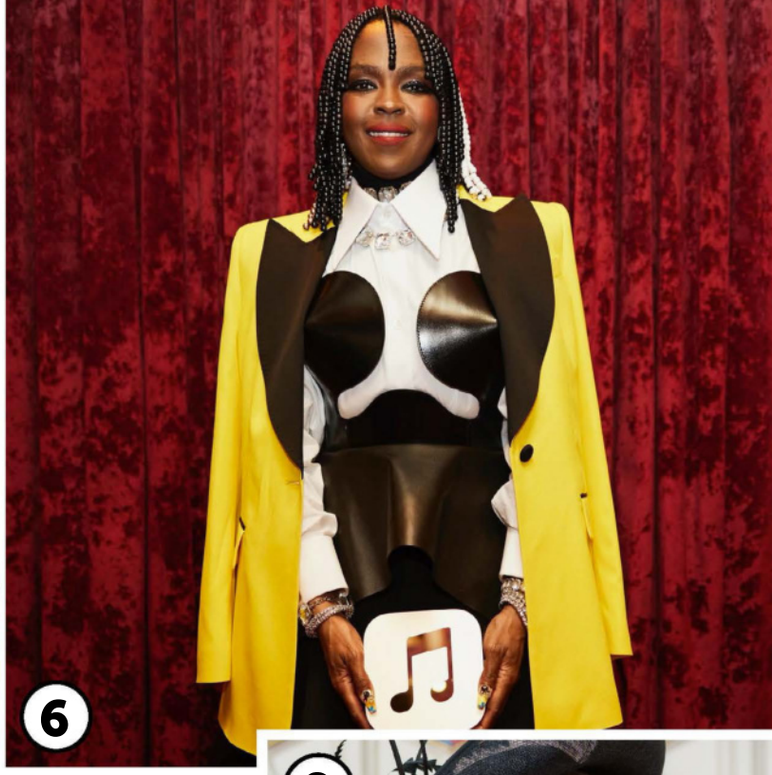


A

B

1

1. Red carpet affair Artists, songwriters and executives across the industry gathered at London's Grosvenor House for The Ivors 2024, with winners including: **A)** Bruce Springsteen, who was presented his Fellowship by Paul McCartney, **B)** Raye, **C)** Lana Del Rey, **D)** Bernie Taupin, standing with UMPG MD Mike McCormack and **E)** Skepta. (Photos: Dave Hogan/Hogan Media/Shutterstock/Kristy May Currie). **2. Open for business** Sony Music UK's Social Justice Fund won the Corporate Foundation prize at the Third Sector Business Charity Awards. **3. Polar express** Nile Rodgers was presented with the Polar Music Prize. (Photo: Annika Berglund/Polar Music Prize). **4. Steal the show** The Other Songs' showcase took place at The London Palladium. Pictured are (*L-R*): Vince Amoroso (The Other Songs), Tara Brady (TikTok) and Mark Taylor (The Ivors Academy). (Photo: Mark Allan).



5. Eternal optimist Dua Lipa's third album Radical Optimism hit No.1 in the UK Official Charts and had the biggest opening week of a British act in 2024 so far. It also scored Lipa the biggest opening week for a British female act since Adele. **6. Queen of the Hill** Lauryn Hill's The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill was crowned No.1 on Apple Music's 100 Best Albums list. (Photo: Irma Mchedlishvili). **7. In full Bloom** President Louis Bloom and Team Island Records celebrated the 65th anniversary of the label on the roof of 4 Pancras Square, Kings Cross. **8. Royal occasion** Selina Webb, EVP, Universal Music UK, with her MBE at the investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle. (Photo: PA). **9. Full of (This) Life** Take That broke their own record for having the most shows at The O2, having sold over 600,000 tickets across 39 performances. Pictured are (*L-R*): Emma Bownes (The O2), Howard Donald, Chris Dempsey (YMU), Gary Barlow, Steve Sayer (The O2), Mark Owen and Simon Moran (SJM Concerts). (Photo: The O2/AEG Europe). **10. Raise the roof** National grant giving music charity Restore The Music held its annual Gala fundraiser. Pictured is founder Polly Moore with Mike Rogers, head of music at Harris Academy Greenwich, an RTM grantee school, with his music students who performed on the night. (Photo: Phoebe Rolls). **11. One in a billion** Amy Winehouse posthumously received a BRIT Billion Award from the BPI for reaching one billion streams in the UK. The award was collected by her parents, Janis and Mitch Winehouse. (Photo: UMR).

"WHAT I'M DOING SHOULD PISS THE INDUSTRY OF

On August 11, **Yungblud** intends to send shockwaves through the music business with the launch of his own festival, **BludFest**. The event is billed as a righteous alternative to rising ticket prices and homogeneous line-ups, and the chart-topping rocker believes it can change the live sector. Furthermore, he doesn't mind one bit about ruffling feathers in the process. To lift the lid on the whole shebang, *Music Week* meets the wild-eyed star, alongside **Special Projects** and **AEG Presents UK**, to discuss his masterplan and hear how the industry can treat artists and fans with the respect they deserve...

WORDS: JAMES HANLEY **PHOTOS:** TOM PALLANT

New Blud: *Yungblud, photographed for Music Week in May 2024*

Aged just 26, Yungblud may be about to shake up the live music business. The Gen Z icon – real name Dom Harrison – has injected his own special kind of chaos into a festival scene ripe for disruption, devising his very own "affordable" one-day event, BludFest.

"I was home towards the end of last year; we'd come back from Asia and I was looking at myself, going, 'What is the next logical step for me?'" recalls Harrison. "I'd had the idea of BludFest for three years and my head just went, 'We're going to do that.'"

Harrison will headline its first edition on August 11. Set for Milton Keynes Bowl, the event promises to be unlike anything that has gone before it. Railing against overpriced tickets and unrepresentative line-ups, Harrison has capped admission at £49.50 (excluding fees), while hand-picking a genre-diverse supporting cast led by Lil Yachty, Soft Play, The Damned, Nessa Barrett, Lola Young and Jazmin Bean. Days after our interview, the bill for its second stage is revealed, featuring Noahfinnce, Jesse Jo Stark, Landon Barker, Hannah Grae and Aziya.

"I was sick of being told, 'You can't do that, it's just the way it is,'" sighs Harrison. "We were playing 6,000 to 7,000-seat amphitheatres in America [last summer] but 500 seats would be completely empty because they were $200 a ticket. I'd have 1,000 kids outside the venue who couldn't afford to come in and I was like, 'Something's got to change here.'"

The warm-hearted Yorkshireman is in supremely sociable and sweary form taking time out from rehearsals in London ahead of a pre-festival season tour of the Baltics for an unfiltered hour-long sit down with *Music Week*. Dressed all in black, complete with a hat bearing Yungblud's trademark skull and crossbones logo, he wastes no time in ruffling feathers.

"I see the price of big artists at the minute and I think it's bullshit," he laments. "[The Cure's] Robert Smith was a massive inspiration last year, because he called it out in America, and I was like, 'Right, sick, I'm doing it.' A lot of the fucking industry don't really like us. A lot of the critics in the UK don't really like me. My fanbase is all I've got and we get each other, so all I want to do is put them first. And I want to fucking play to them."

Signed to Polydor in the UK, Harrison already has multiple tours and two No.1 albums under his belt – 2020's Weird! (which has 127,232 sales to date, according to the Official Charts Company) and 2022's Yungblud (51,184). Allied to his openness on heavy topics such as mental health and sexual assault, he has built up a 14.5 million-strong social media following (not to mention 7.6 million monthly Spotify listeners) powered by his Black Hearts Club army of superfans. Yungblud's manager Tommas Arnby, discusses how Harrison has been able to inspire such devotion.

"By giving him space to express himself unapologetically, without filtering and encouraging him to just be completely 'authentic', I think he became a torchbearer not just for alternative music, but also for the fact that you can have that connection with a community that goes both ways," says Arnby. "He always says that Yungblud is 50% him and 50% them, which I think is beautiful, and he lives by that. It's not just something he throws out there to get engagement, he truly stands by it."

Faithful to that community ethos, BludFest will feature a Make A Friend tent alongside free photo booths, as well as designated safe spaces and welfare areas. A Yungblud museum will showcase artefacts from across Harrison's career while, in a further quirky addition, one of the festival bars is being remodelled to emulate his favourite pub, Camden's The Hawley Arms, complete with its own branded burger.

"I have these mad ideas when I wake up in the middle of the night, and I've got a team that's mad enough to fucking go with me," shares Harrison. "I was like, 'The community is massive. It's global. It's fucking huge, so let's put it in one place and really make a statement.'"

The Doncaster-born musician, who launched the festival in March with an impromptu gig in Camden Market, is buzzing for the big day.

"I'm really lucky to have a fanbase that will follow me and allow me to do shit like this," he says. "I'm not really feeling pressure; it's a lot of fun and we're doing it for the right reason."

If Team Yungblud held any reservations about the wisdom of BludFest, the way Harrison put the news into the public domain ensured there was no turning back.

"I told the guys about it at the end of November, and then I went on the red carpet at an awards show and basically said, 'I'm starting my own festival,'" smiles Harrison. "That forced my managers into being like, 'Oh fuck, we've got to do it now!'"

Arnby recalls the incident vividly with a chuckle.

"I think he was chatting to Louis Tomlinson and then a journalist got in the mix and [Harrison] said, 'Oh, by the way, I'm starting my own festival next,'" grins the manager, who insists he was always fully on board with the plan.

"It's something we'd obviously talked about and have been totally aligned on," adds the Dane. "We have a [range] of verticals: the festival is one; he's got his first book for young adults with Penguin coming in August; there's a lifestyle brand; there's acting; there's a long-form documentary... So it's not about him convincing us, it's more about, 'When are we doing it?' His ideas are so prolific."

After declaring that BludFest would be a festival "that cuts the corporate bollocks", Harrison faced allegations of hypocrisy when it emerged he had partnered on the event with global promoter AEG Presents UK. He hit back in a TikTok video, stressing he was "barely breaking even" from the event.

Referencing the backlash, he tells *Music Week*: "As I said in my statement at the time, if you want to change a corporate industry, you've got to change it from within. You can't just sit in the pub and be like, 'Fuck the system, man,' because that gets nothing done."

In case you hadn't realised, Harrison is not one to sit around...

"Any time you try and pop your head above the fucking trench, you're going to get fucking shot at, you know what I mean?" he continues. "It used to affect me, but I've now got to this point where it's like I'm a punchbag for people and I'm into that, because at least they're feeling *something*. Any sort of feeling towards this brand, they're welcome, because that's the whole point of it."

Harrison's primary point of contact on the AEG front has been the company's SVP, promoting division, Lee Laborde.

"Dom took care of the biggest challenge and that was the vision," reflects Laborde. "When you work with an artist who knows himself and his audience so clearly, it becomes a relatively easy process. We're starting a festival from scratch, but the ethos and community have been there for years already."

Laborde predicts that more and more artists may take the lead on festivals – immersing their fanbase into their worlds.

"A great example is what Tyler, The Creator has done with Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival – it's the standard bearer, really," he observes.

On the ticket price, Adam Wood, who is part of Yungblud's management team, speaks of Harrison's determination to lower the barrier to entry (the singer previously arranged to sell tickets for his 2023 US tour for $20).

"Dom identified a problem, which was that the price of tickets – combined with the cost-of-living crisis – means that certain kids aren't being allowed the experiences that we were," says Wood. "So he took this idea to Lee, and Lee said, 'The finances don't work.' And Dom was like, 'Well, we need to make them work...'"

Laborde confirms that Harrison's commitment to keeping the cost of entry as low as possible was clear from the get-go.

"It's something we worked really closely on and I believe we got

ROLE CALL
MEET TEAM YUNGBLUD

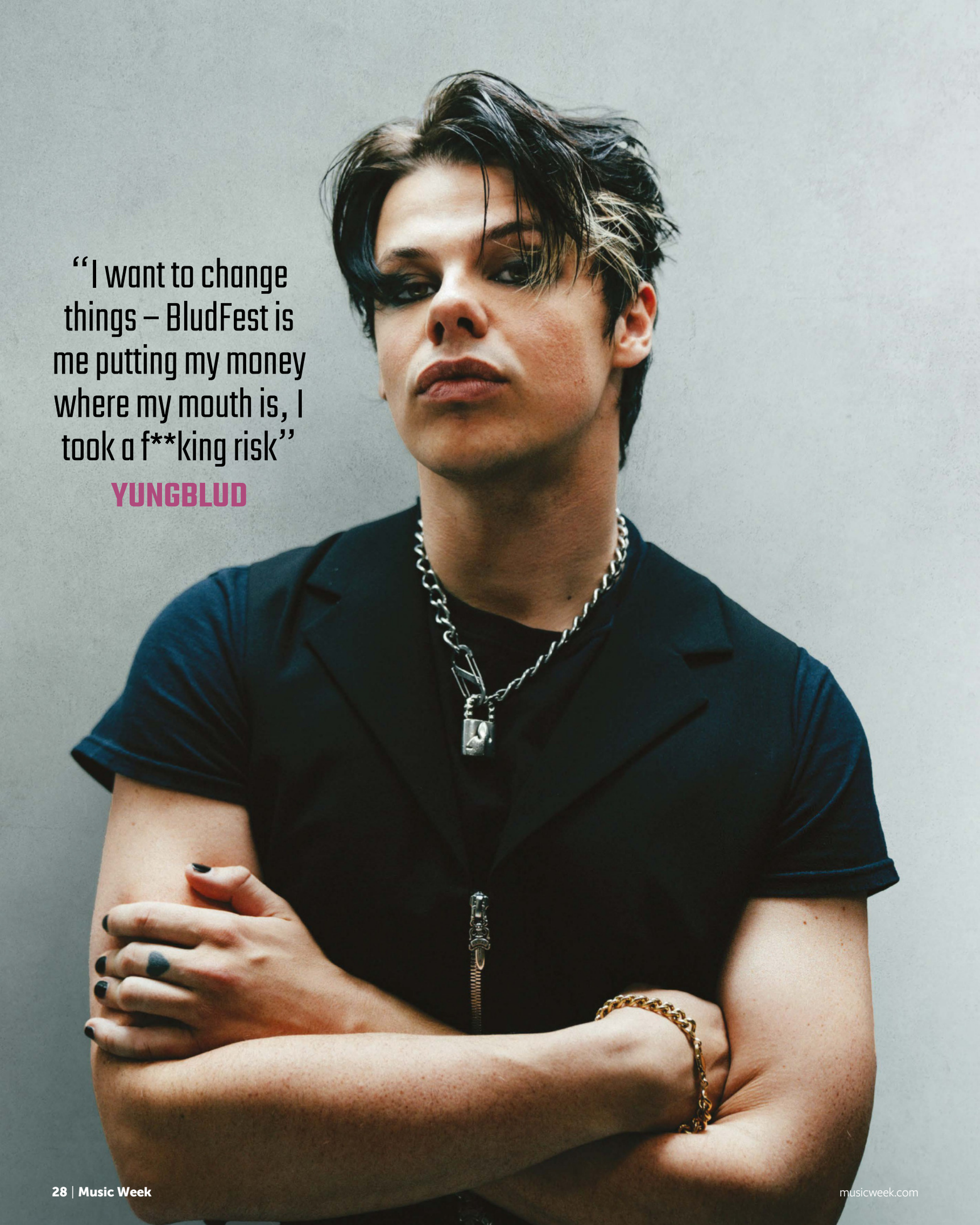
Management: Tommas Arnby, Adam Wood (Special Projects)
Label: Capitol, Polydor, Universal Music Group
CEO: Tom March (Capitol)
President: Ben Mortimer (Polydor)
Promoter: Lee Laborde (AEG Presents UK)
Agent: Paul Franklin, David Ball (CAA)
Marketing: Sam Breslin (Capitol), Lauren Fitzgerald (Polydor)
Digital: Miya Ugursoy (Capitol), Oliver Hunter (Polydor)
Print & Online Press: Rachael Chinery, Donnay Clancy, Tilly O'Brien (DawBell)
Creative: Dom Harrison, Tom Pallant, Jess Severn, Joe Mortimer (Capitol)

PHOTOS: Samir Hussein/Wireimage, Getty

Jump around: *Yungblud performing at the BludFest launch event and (above left) meeting his fans after the show*

"Live music is becoming inaccessible and that's bullshit, so I want BludFest to show that it is for everyone"

YUNGBLUD



"I want to change things – BludFest is me putting my money where my mouth is, I took a f**king risk"

YUNGBLUD

it to a level where he was happy, and for me that's a big win," he says.

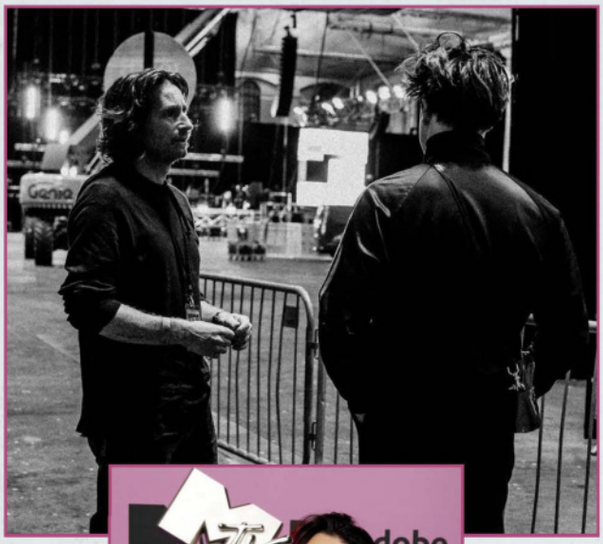
From AEG's point of view, the relationship has been nothing but positive.

"It's always exciting to work with creative people who want to find different ways of engaging with their fanbase," says AEG Presents UK CEO Steve Homer. "Yungblud is focused on delivering fan experiences that reflect their shared enjoyment of his music."

Indeed, contrary to what some people may think, Harrison is very much the master of his own destiny.

"A lot of people don't believe that it comes out of my head, or think this has been a whole masterplan from some other entity, but I hate to disappoint you," offers Harrison. "It's just fucking ADHD, Dr Pepper, coffee and no sleep that gets this shit going."

With that, *Music Week* delves further into Harrison's plans for BludFest, shaking up the status quo and exactly how he arrived at that price point...



Only Yung once: *Yungblud with manager Tommas Arnby (top) and winning at the MTV EMAs in 2021 (bottom)*

In terms of ticket sales, is there a figure in mind that will make BludFest a success? Or is it not about that?

"To be brutally honest, it's a 10-year project and it's been completely overwhelming. We were going to do it at Warwick Castle, but we would have sold that out on presale. We did the Bowl because it can hold between 25,000 and 70,000, so the next 10 years are going to probably get us to that 70,000 mark. I'm really happy with the way tickets have gone; it's going to be mobbed and the biggest show we've played. It'll be a celebration of the past five years of this thing: from playing to 300 people in Dingwalls in Camden to Milton Keynes Bowl at nearly 30,000."

Do you have a genuine sense that BludFest is upsetting the status quo in the industry?

"This is what I've wanted to do for my whole career: I want to change things and this is me putting my money where my mouth is. I took a fucking risk and I could have burnt a lot of bridges, but I always wanted to do it respectfully and say, 'Listen, you've got to look at what people's reality is right now.' I don't want people to ever think it's just me being like, 'Fuck you for fuck you's sake.' It's never that; it's always in the name of a better idea."

You've described the idea as "poking the bear". Did you expect it to rub certain people the wrong way?

"It should piss promoters off! It should piss an industry off that has been taking the piss for a while. Everything I do pisses people off, so I was pretty geared up for it. I knew that Fred Perry dads would have a problem with it – they always do – and I'm into it. I think they should all come. I think they'll have a really good time."

But could some of that rhetoric see you talk yourself out of getting booked for major festivals in the future?

"If I am, I am; that's just the way it is. I never lead out of fear. If you lead out of fear in music, you get left behind. If you wait for an opportunity that may never come, you're going to be waiting a long time. My vibe is to uplift young artists, to bring people together, let them make memories and have a really good time. If people can't see I'm trying to do it from a place of love, that's when I've got a problem with them."

What do you want the ultimate outcome to be?

"At the end of the day, all that matters to me is did people have the best fucking time? I don't care how much money we spend. I don't care how much money we lose. I don't care how many people turn up. Did the people there have the fucking best time ever and make insane memories? That's it for me. When BludFest comes around, it's going to be like, 'Look what we created here.' Not me, all of us: look what my team did, look what my fanbase did, look what we all did. I've been playing with my drummer since I was 14, with my guitar tech since I was 10. It's a fucking family affair, and it's going to be the biggest family affair anyone's ever seen."

Are there plans for beyond this year?

"We're talking about taking it to America and Australia. I'm going to try and reach out to The Smashing Pumpkins or The Cure for next year, then the plan is to take it to America in the middle of the year. That looks like it's happening. I want it to be this constant thing that people can come to every year and for it to be affordable, to show that music is for everyone. At the minute, it's not; it's becoming inaccessible and that's bullshit."

You already know Robert Smith, right?

"Oh I love Robert Smith, man. I met him at the [2020] NME Awards. Seeing him at the table I was like, 'Fucking hell.' I took my mum as my date to the NME Awards, and we sat at the table and I went, 'Where the fuck's my mum gone?' She's over in the corner talking to Robert Smith. So I run over and say, 'Hello, Mum, what are you doing? Hello, Robert.' He's like, 'Hello, you're a Doncaster boy, aren't you?' Some of his family were from Doncaster. At the start of Tissues, we sampled Close To Me. I emailed him for the clearance and he emailed back, saying, 'I love what you're doing.' And Robert Smith types emails in all capital letters – he shouted at me!"

Going back to this year's line-up, was representation a key concern?

"It was massively important for me, from genre, to race, to gender. It was literally just like, 'This is what we've got to do.' It couldn't be like, 'Oh, it'll be alright, we'll get better next year.' I'm like, 'No, set a precedent in the first year – go.'"

We've seen more than 40 festival cancellations in the UK this year. Does the future of the sector worry you?

"And in Australia with Splendour In The Grass – it's everywhere. Again, it's by not realising the current climate of the world we're living in. Don't be blind to what is going on. The world changes and people haven't got a lot of money right now. Offer something that is a reality to their lifestyle, as opposed to saying, 'We've charged £250 for the past 10 years, why have tickets not sold as well this year?'"

How did you settle on the ticket price for BludFest?

"I just said, '11 bands for £49.50.' Everyone was like, '£60? £55?' [I said], 'No, £49.50, that's it.' I was like, 'Milton Keynes Bowl, Yungblud, 11 bands, £49.50.' Getting people on board with the price and convincing them it's coming from a real place [have been the hardest aspects]. And sleep – I've not fucking slept since [launching]."

So can BludFest change the business?

"It's definitely going to incite something. I think it already has, and the fact that America wants it is pretty big. My agent, [CAA's] Paul Franklin, has been incredible at facilitating every mad idea or telling me if it's too mad. But I called him and he was like, 'No, I don't think it's too mad, it's exciting.' It's about positive change and giving power back to the artists. If you look at Raye talking about songwriters, or me putting on my own festival, as long as enough people follow you into the fucking breach, then it will change."

Can you give us an idea of how hard it is for musicians now?

"I don't really make money from my music. I have to go on tour and sell merch. That's how I can eat. The fanbase, I owe them

> "Yungblud is a torchbearer for proving that you can have a connection with a community that goes both ways"
>
> **TOMMAS ARNBY, SPECIAL PROJECTS**

PHOTOS: John Phillips-Pool, MTV, Christopher Polk, Interscope, Ki Price, Getty

everything. That's why I never take them for granted. I look at some of the labels; everyone's talking and then I put my two cents in and go, 'You're forgetting about one fucking thing – the fans.' If I start a label and get an office, I'm going to paint it on everyone's desk or make sure everyone gets it tattooed on their arm. Everything should serve your community and that's how you should make your decisions, as opposed to cashing in. For my brand, everything's got to have my eyes on it and my tone of voice. One wrong move can make the whole thing come crashing down because it has to be from a place of authenticity and respect."

So how can the industry lift up artists better?

"If major labels in the UK did nights in independent venues – not just in London, but in Manchester, in Birmingham – they would find better acts to sign. They would lead less off the algorithm and more off what real people want. My plan in the future – and you can put this in print so I can hold myself to it – is to start a record company that has these things in mind, because my favourite times, where I learned so much about Yungblud and the people coming to my shows, were in 50 to 200-cap shows."

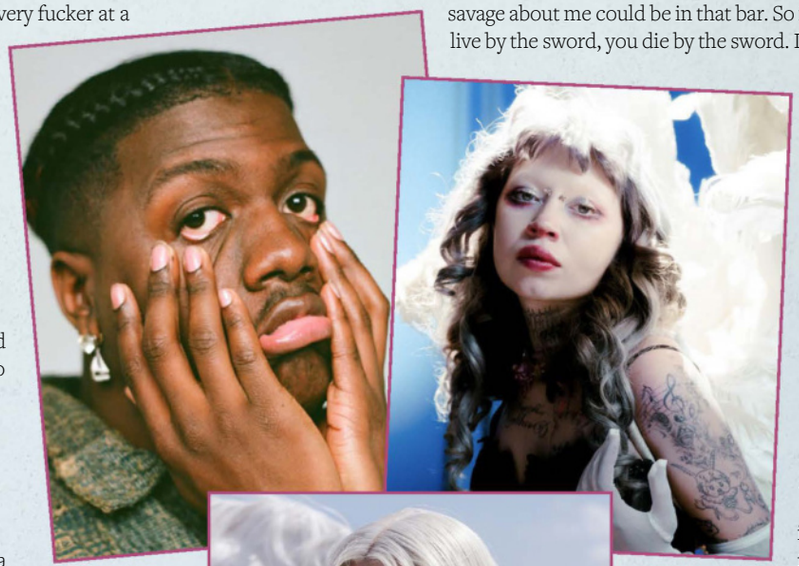
How do you see the picture for small venues at the moment?

"I love grassroots venues, that's where I get a fucking kick. That's where I found fans, I still go to the Sebright Arms on a Friday night to see what the fuck's happening. They're your learning grounds, where you find the most connections, friends, your favourite band, where you try your fucking favourite lager. With BludFest, I want to make it a mission to adhere to that and on my next tours, I want to donate a portion of the ticket price [to small venues]."

> "It's exciting to work with someone who wants to find different ways of engaging their fanbase"
>
> **STEVE HOMER, AEG PRESENTS UK**

Have you always been interested in the business side?

"I love it. The thing that captured my imagination was the Sex Pistols and the way [their history] went hand in hand with Vivienne Westwood. I always see it like this, if this doorway is success, every fucker at a club is waiting at the door to get in, right? So you either wait there or you hop the fence and come in from another side."



Has the industry chatter about superfans come onto your radar?

"I roll my eyes when I hear that shit. It's funny when terminology comes into fucking play. I'm like, 'You're late.' Bottom line is, speak the truth. Love your fucking fanbase. Try your best and listen to them and it'll be fine. So it's so funny when I end up on a mood board in a corporate building where they're saying, 'This is how it should be done.' And it's like, 'No! Because it doesn't work like that for every artist.' You couldn't put my method onto fucking Harry Styles, he'd go bankrupt. I'm on a different mission. I didn't get here through a talent show or a hit record, I got here by meeting person-to-person. I can't just rely on the label, the machine, to do it for me. I have to fight for every monthly listener and fan against the world. It's always a battle, but as long as I'm with them it's lit."

To shift focus for a moment, you've spoken out about topics such as ADHD and sexual assault – why was that so important, and how has that affected you?

"It's all been pretty liberating for me. When I put Parents out, everyone was like, 'Don't do that, that lyric's mental.' No radio station wanted to play it and the label thought it was too out there, but all my mates were talking about it and that's what I'm led by. [Trigger warning] I got fucking sexually assaulted by a doctor. I got repressed in that environment. That's what actually happened, so why not sing about it? Because that's my story. You don't know what song is going to define you – you just don't – that's not up to you, so just put it out. I might never have a big song again, but I know that Funeral, Parents, Lowlife, Polygraph Eyes, I Love You, Will You Marry Me, up to now, have defined what you think of when you listen to Yungblud. I want this next bit to define me, but it might not. You just don't know."

There have also been numerous high-profile instances recently of artists cancelling tours citing mental health issues, from Sam Fender and Arlo Parks to Lewis Capaldi. How do you view that situation?

"Lewis is a good mate. He's just a fucking dude from Scotland who's a really nice guy. He's funny as fuck and writes songs. It's mental pressure, but I love that guy and he is what he says on the tin, in the same way that I am. It's hard being on the internet, and the craziest thing about being 'successful' – whatever that means now – is that you have opinion in real time. Can you imagine if Pink Floyd had that while putting The Dark Side Of The Moon out? They probably wouldn't have fucking done it. They didn't have the whole world on their phone going, 'You're sick, you're shit, you're fake, you're a liar, you're dope, I hate you, I love you, my sister loves you, blah, blah, blah.' People love you or hate you, and it's really hard to deal with because you become fucking ketchup. It's like, 'You fucking love ketchup on your bacon sarnie or you fucking hate it.' Once I'd got that into my head, it was like, 'This is just the way it's meant to be.'"

What's your own relationship with social media like these days?

"I wouldn't have made it without it. Everyone in a position of power turned their nose up at me, and all that mattered was the people and me being able to have a platform. But also, it's damaged me more than anything in my life. It's made me afraid to go outside or to the pub sometimes, because those people who were so savage about me could be in that bar. So it's pretty dark, but it's also beautiful. You live by the sword, you die by the sword. It's coming to terms with the fact that people will like me and people will not, and that is not in my control."

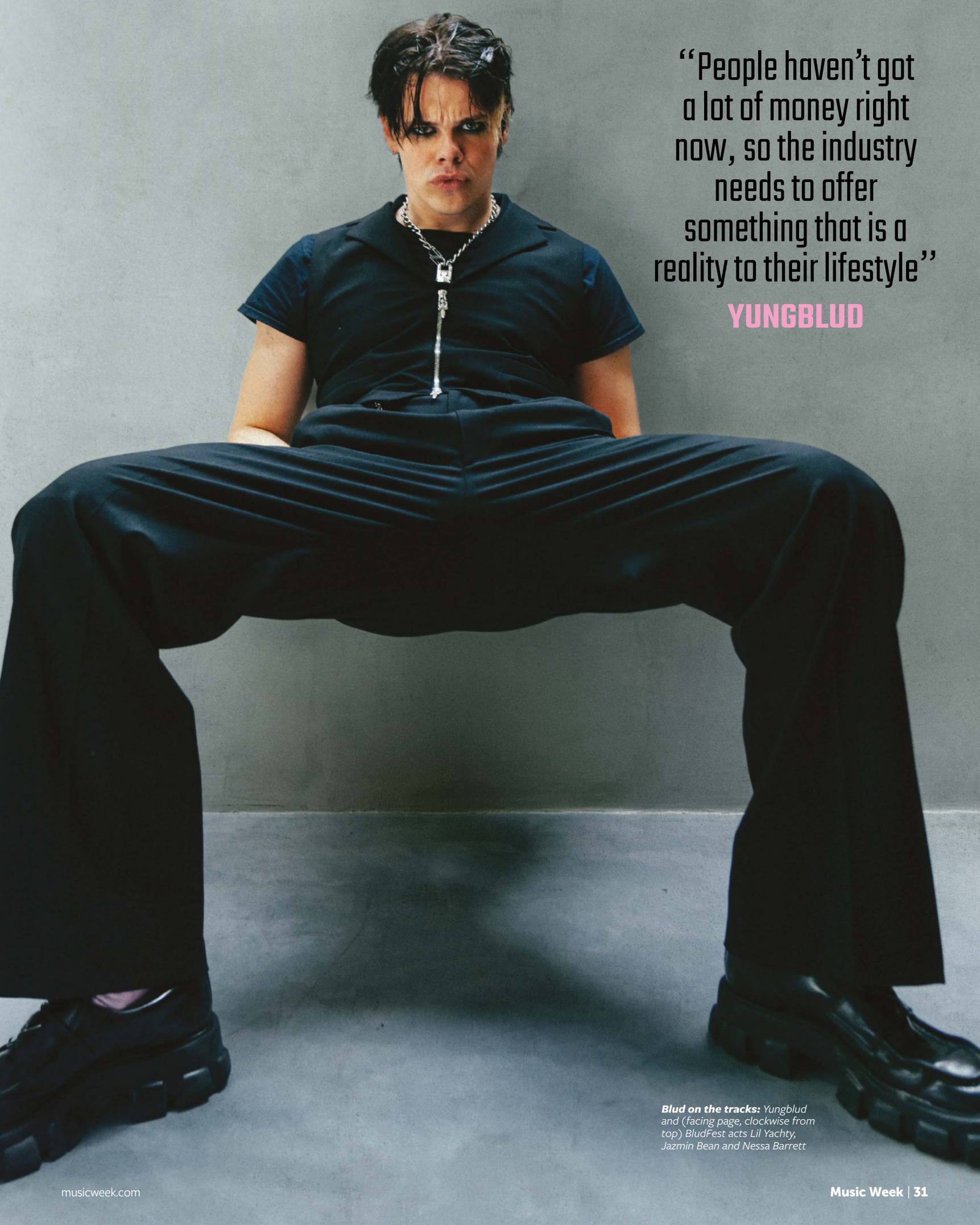
How will the next Yungblud era look?

"This next album is the most ambitious I've ever been, I'm taking the biggest swing of my career. It's music that makes us all feel invincible and it's the light. I've sung about darkness, depression and anger for so long, it's why I stopped myself after Lowlife and Hated. I was like, 'These songs are sick, but I'm repeating myself, stop.' I want to sing about having a good time. Is it reinventing the wheel? No, it's just fucking good rock and roll music that I grew up on. And if it all blows up in my face, sick, but I don't think it will, because it's the deepest shit I've ever felt. It's the first time I've ever surrendered myself to the universe. Instead of writing with my head, I've written with my gut."

Finally, are there any misconceptions about you that you'd like to clear up?

"I feel like a lot of people don't think I'm real. A lot of people think I've had everything handed to me for some weird reason. But I've just got to do my thing, with truth, for as long as I fucking can. This is probably the most unhinged I'm ever going to be because I'm the most exhausted I've ever been. I don't think about the consequences because if it all ends now, we did something massive that people will talk about in years to come. Everything else is extra."

PHOTOS: Tom Pallant, Jamie-Lee Culver, Andrew Donoho



“People haven’t got a lot of money right now, so the industry needs to offer something that is a reality to their lifestyle”

YUNGBLUD

Blud on the tracks: *Yungblud and (facing page, clockwise from top) BludFest acts Lil Yachty, Jazmin Bean and Nessa Barrett*

6 sense: *Lauren Laverne won the Radio Show category at the Music Week Awards in May*

"Winning a Music Week Award is like getting a degree in radio!"
LAUREN LAVERNE

THE Music Week INTERVIEW

LAUREN LAVERNE

Synonymous with both **BBC Radio 6 Music** and the corporation's television coverage of **Glastonbury**, **Lauren Laverne** is gearing up for her busiest month of the year, which comes hot on the heels of her latest **Music Week Awards** win. To celebrate, we meet the presenter and broadcaster to chart the most recent chapter of her illustrious career, challenge misconceptions about 6 Music and dissect the unique position the station occupies in our industry...

WORDS: ANNA FIELDING **PHOTOS:** BBC

For Lauren Laverne, life has rarely been busier than it is when *Music Week* encounters the BBC Radio 6 Music star at the station's HQ on a Friday morning in late May. She has just come off air, having delivered her final breakfast show of a manic week.

The night before we speak, she was in central London hosting the Ivors, taking a rare breather from the intense Glastonbury preparations that dominate her schedule at this time of year. Shortly before that, it was her own name in lights, as she triumphed in the Radio Show category at the Music Week Awards, reclaiming a trophy she won in 2019, when her breakfast show gig began.

It was a momentous victory and Laverne smiles as we start by reflecting on what it means to have won, acknowledging that, for career milestones such as this, her hectic schedule must take a back seat.

"I think that, with the creative industries in general, music in particular and doing what I do, it's not like there's a qualification you can get that says you can do it," she begins. "You do what you do and you really put your heart and soul into it, you put it out there and just hope it connects with people. There aren't really that many metrics that show you're doing a good job, so for me, winning this award is like getting a bloody degree in radio."

She describes the affirmation as "fantastic," and is proud to "know that my peers, in an industry I've spent my life in and that I care about, think that what we're doing is important."

At this point, Laverne obviously has no need of any degree in radio. She started her career as the lead singer in indie band Kenickie, a blur of glitter, guitars and clever lyrics. But she has spent the majority of her working life as a broadcaster. In addition to her prime breakfast spot on 6 Music, she hosts Radio 4's Desert Island Discs, arguably the biggest jewel in BBC radio's crown.

Laverne has hosted Desert Island Discs for almost six of the show's 82 years and has also worked on the Late Night version of Radio 4's Woman's Hour. She has been at 6 Music since 2008, moving from mid-morning to breakfast in 2019. Prior to that she worked on various shows at XFM, starting at the alternative station in 2002. There have also been many high-profile TV gigs: she's currently a presenter on BBC One's flagship magazine programme The One Show, and a key figure in the corporation's Glastonbury programming across both TV and radio.

Laverne will kick off this year's coverage, as her show goes out live from Worthy Farm on June 26, on the morning the gates open and the crowds begin to pour in. For now though, she and her team are in London, where they have just hosted both Jessica Gunning and Stephen Merchant as guests. Laverne, a Sunderland girl, also talks happily about the Newcastle theme to today's Desert Island Disco slot.

The presenter certainly packs a lot into her early mornings. She has already run into the Pet Shop Boys in a corridor, informing them that she'd played their hit Left To My Own Devices after it was requested by a listener. The legendary duo told her they felt the song would have made for "a rather lively start to the day" for her audience. Laverne took it in her stride, feeling fresh after the Ivors. She doesn't drink when she has to work the next day and is used to late nights coupled with early starts.

"You cut your cloth and you make up for it elsewhere," she says.

The evening's festivities, though, left her buzzing.

"It might sound cheesy to say this, but it made me so full of the joy about the possibility of pop music," she says.

Laverne also loved seeing the "young fans lining up outside for Lana Del Rey, holding their books of poetry and with glitter everywhere". Her youngest son had actually instructed Laverne not to wash her hand if she was able to touch Del Rey. "I think I was supposed to anoint his head with molecules of her DNA," she explains. It was a reasonable request in Laverne's eyes: this is the kind of fandom she understands.

Such passion makes her the perfect fit for the BBC's Glastonbury coverage, as Alison Howe, executive producer for Glastonbury on TV, BBC Studios, explains.

"Lauren has always had Glastonbury in her heart and her passion for the event, the music and the whole celebration of the weekend shines through," says Howe. "We are able to offer an incredible range of artists across our coverage, so we can celebrate the household names, but also importantly offer a space for many artists to reach a whole new audience."

Jonathan Rothery, head of BBC Pop Music TV, is anticipating a "cultural moment" and says the introduction of a second dedicated Glastonbury channel on iPlayer will improve this year's package.

"Glastonbury Channel II will feature highlights and festival moments, meaning that viewers are able to catch up on the weekend's events as they happen," he says. "Not everybody will be watching live all weekend, so this channel allows those who are dipping in and out to stay up to date."

Rothery calls the line-up a "carefully curated broad church," and praises the

BBC teams both behind and in front of the camera for their "gold standard coverage".

It's no surprise to hear that Laverne cannot wait to be back on Worthy Farm.

"It's the best bit of the year and I'm really up for it," she says. "It's all about trying to bring that festival experience as close as you can to audiences at home."

But before all that, we settle in for an in-depth discussion that covers her award-winning success, misconceptions about 6 Music and the station's unique position in the music industry...

Field of dreams: *Lauren Laverne with her Music Week Award (top) and with (bottom, L-R) Alison Howe, Emily Eavis and Lorna Clarke on site at Glastonbury*

Congratulations on your latest Music Week Awards win! What do you think made your peers in the industry vote for you?

"Well, I still can't quite believe it. The whole team works really, really hard to make sure that every day we are excited and we're bringing a number of different elements together in a way that just feels easy, fun and accessible. It's not a typical breakfast show, it's not a conventional listen. But maybe that's why people like it. I certainly hope so. I decided a long time ago that I just want to make programmes that feel like they're doing something constructive in the world. That doesn't always mean everything's shiny and happy-clappy, it's about hope, not optimism. It's something positive in people's day."

What exactly prompted that decision?

"Years ago, I was talking to one of the members of the band Songhoy Blues. They're from Mali and they got together because they were all exiled. Music was made illegal by the government, briefly. They had to move out of their homes and they met in the city of Bamako. Nat [Dembélé] from the band told me there's a saying in Mali that everybody hears the tree fall down, but nobody hears the forest growing. I thought about it a lot, because sometimes all we hear in the world is the sound of trees falling. My challenge was to think about what my response to that should be. I wanted my job to be the forest growing. Supporting people who are doing creative things, making space for listeners to talk about their lives and bring what they care about out on air, being a bit of company for someone on a rainy Wednesday morning."

How has the culture at 6 Music changed in your time there?

"As a station, it has always had a very positive outlook. If you think of the music that we play, that alternative space is very forward-looking and accepting. It's a nice place to work with lovely people, and it always has been. In terms of direct cultural change, it's always evolving, there's always new voices coming in. There was a long, long time when I was one of the few women there and the only one on weekdays and I am glad that has evolved over time. There are wonderful people, Mary Anne [Hobbs] and Jamz [Supernova] doing such brilliant work. That's nice because that's your little group and you become friends and support each other. Sherelle [DJ and producer] was on my show, she was in covering for Mary Anne, she's wonderful. There's so much brilliant talent coming through. That's great to see, culture-wise, but it has always been a great place to work. Then, in May, the boss [head of station Sam Moy] and a few others came up with Change The Tune [an initiative to raise awareness around the impact online abuse has on artists]."

Why is it important for 6 Music to do this?

"I think it's probably the first time that it's really been made explicit that we want positive engagement with our audience, but without abusing people and behaving in a way that you would never do in real life [in June last year, musician Billy Nomates asked 6 Music for a social media post containing footage of her Glastonbury set to be removed, citing 'personal abuse']. In terms of a cultural shift, that's the first time where we've said, 'We're going to introduce a code of conduct because we feel it's necessary in social spaces.' It's wonderful to see, especially as someone who came up in the '90s music industry, which is a weird way to meet the adult world."

You referenced Sam Moy, how would you sum up her impact on 6 Music?

"Sam is such a great boss, I absolutely love working with her. She's really wonderful. I think the Change The Tune campaign is a good example of the kind of plugged-in and compassionate leader that she is. She wants to put music at the forefront, but also wants to create a level playing field where everybody can get involved in a way that's fair and where people aren't shouted down. She's also someone who has made a lot of programmes. I always think it's really helpful when you've got a boss who has made radio and knows how it works. She's a really great support for DJs, but also for production teams as she knows the job inside and out. And then there's bringing through new people, new shows, making space for new genres of music. We've always championed that, but she is just making sure that we are. Alternative culture is so broad and always exists in counterpoint to the mainstream. It's also ever-evolving, so you can't just say, 'It's this,' and then do that thing forever. Sam has been great on that front."

After she took the job, Sam told us that the biggest challenge 6 Music faces is one of awareness. Would you agree with that?

"That is the challenge, it's not about what we're doing. We know that as soon as people find us then they love us and they stay with us for a long time. If you want to get into the boring industry metrics of it, 6 is an outlier, an interesting test case. Our listeners don't behave in typical ways: people listen for hours and hours, and we were one of the first digital-only stations so people have made us part of their daily life. A lot of people are looking at us, even though we're smaller, because they think, 'When FM stops, how are our audiences going to behave?' So, as part of that, we know that the more people know we exist, the more we will grow. It is a challenge of awareness."

Previously, some have imagined 6 Music's typical listeners to be middle-aged men who like indie rock. Is that association still there? And is it something you've actively worked against?

"No. We have a really broad audience and all kinds of people are welcome to listen and I would hope we wouldn't exclude anyone. And what's wrong with being an indie dad? I just played all eight-and-a-half minutes of Leave Them All Behind by Ride, because those are my guys.

PHOTOS: BBC

"For people who are determined to moan about Glastonbury and find fault, it might not be the festival that is the problem..."
LAUREN LAVERNE

"There was a long period when I was one of the few women at 6 Music – I am glad that has evolved over time"

LAUREN LAVERNE

I don't want any section of our audience to feel like they can't come with us. I feel like the 6 Music Dad thing is really affectionate. It describes loads of the best people I know. But that doesn't mean that's all it is. Because if it does, then why am I doing the breakfast show?"

Homing in on your own programme, what are the ingredients for making a successful radio show in 2024?

"This is much simpler to answer than you might think. There's peripheral stuff you can get caught up in thinking about, but the joy of radio is, in George Orwell's phrase, the audience of one. You start with one listener and you never think of more than one listener. Where are they? What time of day is it? What's going to be happening for them? If you give them what they need then everything will fall into place. Doing my job, there are a lot of elements to consider. You do a lot of research, you do a lot of prep. It takes a long time for us to put the music together, to build the running orders. But weirdly, it's also the same simple job as it always was. It's one person talking to one person, sharing music with them or talking to a guest. If you start with your listener, everything else sorts itself out. That's what I say to the younger team members when I start working with them."

Can you sum up the evolution of the breakfast show in your time as host?

"Well, obviously it changes all the time with new artists, guests and features, but, ultimately, the job is what it is. I was recently at Annie Nightingale's memorial where her kids asked me to talk about her as a broadcaster. Thinking about Annie, you realise the job itself doesn't change, and what's great about it is that it's the most direct, exciting, intimate kind of media that you can create, it's the most connected you can be to your listener. I was thinking about all the years and years that she spent on air. All of this magic and all of this heart, love and passion poured into these shows, and then you're just putting them out into the sky, into the air, not knowing where they're going, really. I said that she was like a nightingale, singing a song and not knowing how far it's going to reach or who is going to hear it. But then, at the end of Annie's life, the tributes to her and the reach of her voice were utterly mind-blowing."

With the benefit of hindsight, how did you change your style with the move from mid-morning to breakfast?

"My audience would arrive at 10 and then stay with us. So it was about [asking], 'How do we bring that into breakfast?' It was an interesting challenge that we've really enjoyed attacking. You can't treat breakfast in the same way as a 10am-1pm show. We could track the quietest period and it was 8-8.30am. Shaun [Keaveny, previous breakfast host] used to call it the dead zone. So we took a gamble and decided to put all of our best stuff in there, to make it the very best half hour of the show. It worked, we flipped it and it keeps everybody with you."

What keeps you at 6 Music specifically?

"Well, I also love Radio 4 and The One Show. I only work with great teams and as you get older, that's so important. I feel incredibly lucky for all of the places that I work, but 6 is my heart. It represents the kind of music fan I am. The life-long adventure of continuing to discover music and the frustration of knowing you will never get to the end of it. I mean, the ephemeral nature is what makes it special, and that is what 6 runs on, it's all about that."

Do people ever get confused on Fridays when you're doing your show on 6 and Desert Island Discs is going out on Radio 4?

"I don't know about people, but I certainly do! There have been numerous occasions when what's happening on one is diametrically opposed to the

other, playing a face-melting techno mix on 6 Music and then on Radio 4 having an intense talk about a high achiever's personal life."

Has doing Desert Island Discs changed your life? Or people's perceptions of you?

"I don't know. You don't try and work out people's perceptions of you, that's their business. But I think it has, hopefully, changed me. There's always opportunity to improve, but I think having those kinds of conversations week in, week out has made me more compassionate. It has made me a better listener and it has made me braver, I think, because it's maybe the most high-profile thing I've done. I'm not a natural attention seeker, I always say radio is the place where people who like to show off in private go. So to be looking after something that is such a jewel in the crown is a big thing. But to know that we're doing a good job, and continue to take care of something I loved so much as a listener, to take it up from Kirsty [Young, former host] who is my hero... It's a real challenge, but it's a joy to get there."

Let's move on to Glastonbury. The lack of veteran acts among the headliners has been criticised by some this year, but the ratio of women to men has improved markedly. Where do you stand on those arguments?

"It's always going to generate conversation and that's fine. That's like any music event, you can't really avoid it. With Glastonbury, you're talking about how many acts? About 2,000? If you can't find something that you like, among that, I think it might be you. But I think when you've got the biggest music and arts festival on the planet, if you're just determined to moan about it and find fault, and you can't find anything that you like, I think it might not be Glastonbury that is the problem. It's all of the clichés, everybody has a different Glastonbury experience. You can go and never see a band and have an amazing Glastonbury. You can go and see music all weekend, none of which you have ever heard before in your life, and have an incredible time. It is so much more than the main headliners."

You must have a good relationship with Emily Eavis having worked on Glastonbury for so long...

"Emily is a friend. When she was younger, she was working in music TV, and we worked at the same company. There was a group of us and we would go and get dinner. The strange thing about it is that people would never put this in the story of my life or Dermot O'Leary's life or Emily's life. But that was the time we all met each other and became friends. Dermot and I worked together on XFM, then he started dating a girl I was living with and now they've been married for decades. I also met my husband on that show. It is this shared experience that we went through together when we were young, but it's invisible to everybody else."

Do you think Emily and the rest of the Eavis family get the credit they deserve?

"Emily, and her husband, Nick, who is absolutely wonderful, their whole team, they work so hard and so brilliantly. They're not in it for the credit, they're in it because what they do is utterly unique. It's an expression of Britishness and British culture, it says something about us as a country that is so special. It's not about making money and the commercial, corporate game; they give a lot of money away. The amount they donate to charities is next level. I know how hard Emily works because she's my friend and I know about the invisible stuff that people don't see. When they stopped using plastic water bottles on site there was pressure on every other festival to follow suit. So there's the environmental side, then the work on diversity, inclusion and gender balance. I know how much effort goes into that and I think if other people understood that, then they would realise there is a lot more to running a festival than who is headlining the main stage."

Host with the most: *(Top to bottom) Lauren Laverne hands Little Simz the 2022 Mercury Prize, with Rick Rubin and with the Pet Shop Boys*

The 6 Music breakfast show has traditionally been the kick-off point for the BBC's coverage. What are your plans for this year?

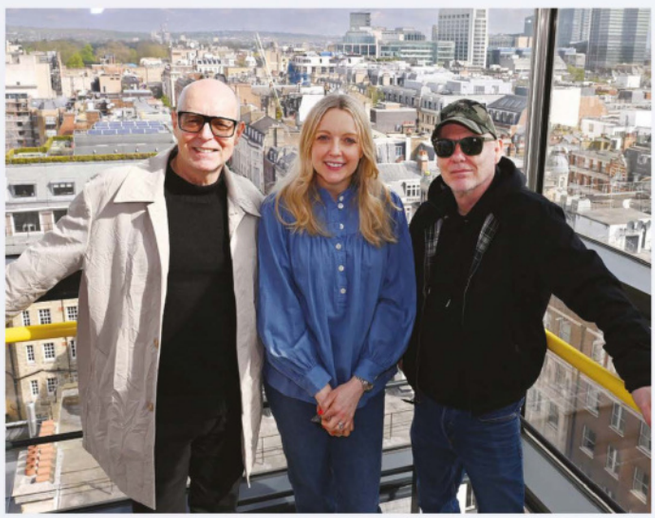
"We're going to be there from the Wednesday morning to the following Monday and there's loads of extra coverage this year. There are special episodes of Sidetracked with Annie Mac and Nick Grimshaw in the run-up for people who want to take a deep dive into the event or the artists. And, once we get into the weekend, it will be all over BBC iPlayer."

Given the 6 Music focus on alternative music, how do you approach mainstream artists like Dua Lipa at Glastonbury?

"The joy of being right across the BBC with Glastonbury is that there's a place and an editorial fit for everybody. But 6 is also a really broad church and we're not in the habit of saying we wouldn't play such-and-such. That's why Glastonbury is pan-BBC, and then people can stream stages online, so they can enjoy whatever they're into."

Personally, what do you want to see from this year's Glastonbury?

"I'm very excited to see what Little Simz does. She told me it will be her only UK show, so I think she will have something very special planned. She is so exciting. In terms of the coverage in general, the great thing about all the technology that we've got now with apps like Sounds and iPlayer is that we can bring such an extensive range of things to viewers and listeners, so they can find whatever they want to on a livestream of particular stage. It's really interesting to see how effective it is at getting you round the festival site. It's a bit like when you're there with your mates and everybody is looking at programmes."



Finally, everyone has their favourite Glastonbury moment. What's yours?

"I remember interviewing Stevie Wonder in 2010, when I was pregnant with my second son. He came off stage and was just being so chilled. It was like it was a Wednesday and he had just popped to the corner shop, but he'd just played the most mind-blowing set you'd ever seen. We nearly called the baby Stevie. Also, Beyoncé [in 2011] was just the most extraordinary thing. It felt as if Glastonbury was truly international and making waves, everything changed at that moment."

PHOTOS: BBC, JMEnternational, Getty

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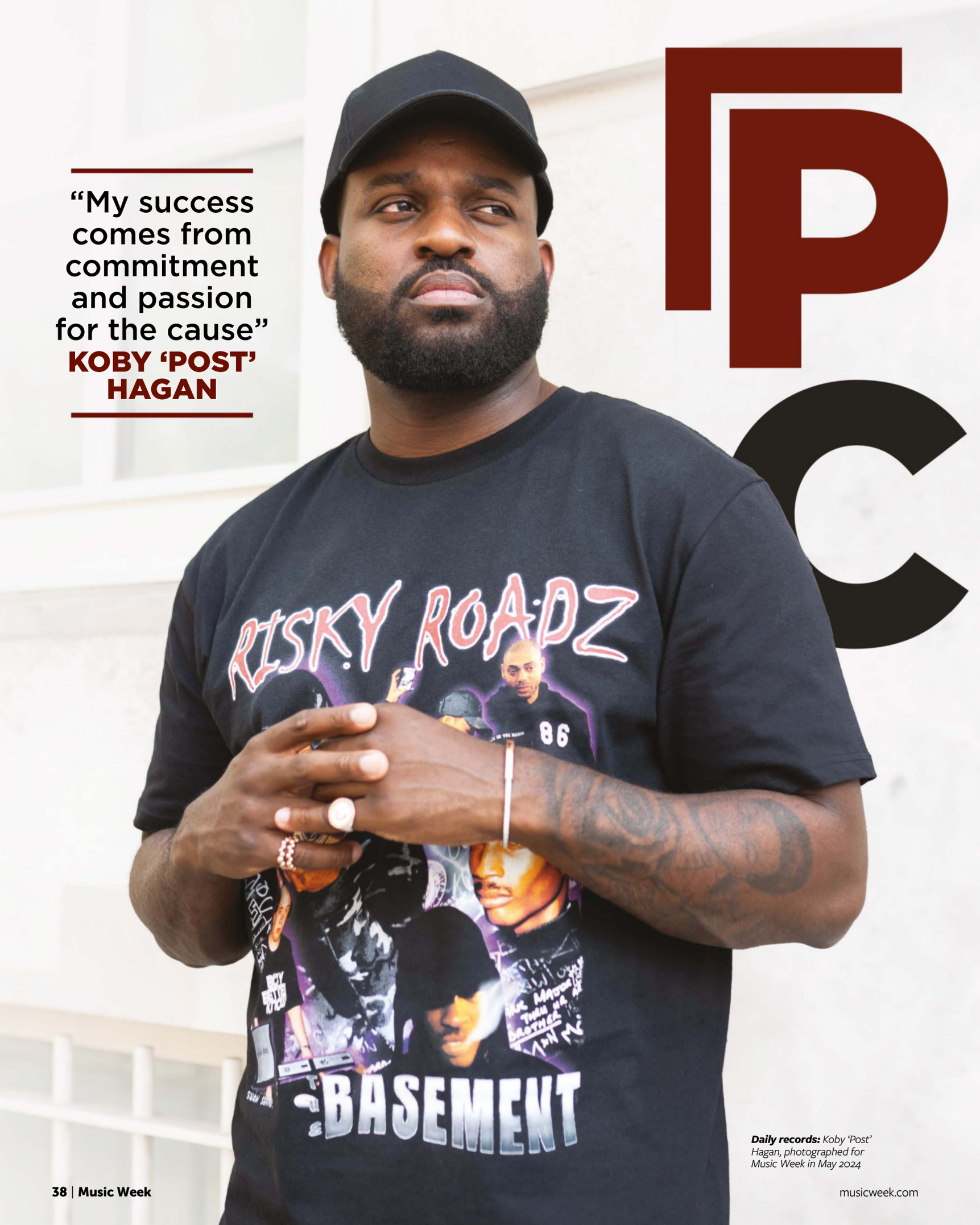
"My success comes from commitment and passion for the cause"
KOBY 'POST' HAGAN



Daily records: *Koby 'Post' Hagan, photographed for Music Week in May 2024*

POST ODE

Black British music and the industry around it has changed beyond recognition since **Koby 'Post' Hagan** launched **GRM Daily** in 2009, but the platform has retained its place at the centre of the action ever since. Here, to celebrate its 15th anniversary, *Music Week* meets its founder to discuss the current state of UK rap, the mechanics behind breaking artists and the secret to staying relevant amidst relentless change...

WORDS: YEMI ABIADE **PHOTOS:** PAULINA FRĄCZEK

Black British music has transformed over the last 15 years, and GRM Daily has offered a front row seat at every step of its journey. Celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, the YouTube channel and platform – boasting more than six million subscribers – has uplifted modern UK rap and grime's biggest names, building a reliable and authoritative presence in wider British music as a harbinger for what's next. Whether through their incredibly popular Daily Duppy freestyle series, its music video premieres, its annual Rated Awards or the star-studded GRM Gala, the platform has planted a flag for Black British success. Think of every rapper to have made their name across the last near-decade – from Stormzy, Dave, AJ Tracey and Headie One, to Tion Wayne, Potter Payper, Central Cee and more – and they all have a presence in GRM's vast ecosystem.

Rather than basking in his achievements, GRM founder Koby 'Post' Hagan is reflective of the path he has carved out, with a keen eye on elevation.

"I think it was always more of a hope [that we'd reach 15 years] than envisioning [the company's longevity] when you're starting something from scratch," he tells *Music Week*. "We built something very early on that we've continued to try and grow every year. That's our state of mind now."

Growth is a mindset Hagan has instilled in his team of 11 full-time employees and wide network of collaborators, sharpening the company's keen eye for spotting the future of the scene. It's the same vision that platformed new age stars such as Nemzzz, Strandz and Clavish at the beginning of their careers, each now gaining widespread recognition. Or, more recently, cultivating its GRM Radio series, inviting Chip, NSG, Youngs Teflon, Ruff Sqwad and others to showcase their music with live band The Compozers. Not to mention Thoughts In A Culli, Hagan's own interview series, which has so far welcomed Ghetts, Unknown T and Potter Payper, among others.

Constantly forging new terrain, GRM retains a relevance that has gone hand in hand with that of the scene it supports, constantly creating opportunities and lanes for artists to follow.

"I love every aspect of GRM," Hagan explains. "It has been difficult at times and at others, really easy and organic. That is just the journey of life, I'd say. You just have to learn and progress as you go along."

While he remains intriguingly tight-lipped about the future, Hagan is steadfast in his convictions about the platform he launched all those years ago and just how far it can go. And so to celebrate 15 years of GRM, Hagan sits down with *Music Week* to assess the brand's journey, mission, the current state of Black British music and what it takes to succeed in the music industry...

Did you ever envision GRM lasting this long? And why and how do you think you have?
"We've just kept trying to build on what we've already established. So that's more where the focus has been, as opposed to the length of time. The focus is always to shine a light on and create opportunities for artists that create UK rap and grime music, and just have a platform that serves that purpose. It's just, I would say, a bigger and continuous mission that we're always trying to build."

What has been the single biggest threat to GRM over that time? Have you ever come close to closing it?
"No, not really. I think the biggest threat to GRM to be honest is our motivation, drive and passion. Obviously, at times in the last 15 years, have there been moments where there have been low vibrations? Of course, because we're only human at the end of the day. For the most part, we've tried to keep ourselves motivated and passionate about what we do, which usually results in positive outcomes."

As we're talking about you turning 15, what's your message to the music industry about what GRM can offer them?
"GRM is a company and an establishment that serves as a catalyst for what we feel the culture needs to do next. We try to play the role of establishing what needs to be done and not wait for other people to do it for us. We encourage doing things for ourselves, and that's what GRM means to me and hopefully can mean to others."

On that topic, what is the biggest change in the way the industry works that you've noticed since you came into it?
"I think it's a lot more structured now. There's a lot of focus on monetary gain. Money and generating income have become way, way, way too much the focus as opposed to when people used to do things and engage in music for the fun and love of it. Everyone wants to drop music on a Friday. Everyone only wants to do things when they've got an album coming out. For me, there's no randomness any more, there's no excitement. I'm a fan of people releasing music and doing random things when they like, as well as a fan of them dropping on a Thursday or Friday. I just think there needs to be a balance sometimes. I'm hoping that people fall in love again with the sport of making music."

And what is the biggest way GRM has changed?
"We've come to understand our corporate social responsibility and our duty to protect the culture a lot more – knowing that with power comes a lot of responsibility. So, it's about growing in that mindset and learning how we position ourselves, the types of conversations and content we create, the type of news that we report on. Just having a little bit of pride in how we approach what we do. That is how we've grown, I believe."

Post with the most: *Koby 'Post' Hagan with Zeze Millz (top) and Stormzy (bottom) at the GRM Gala 2023*

Why is GRM still relevant in the generation of short attention spans, TikTok and the homogenisation of music and culture? Does it play the same role it always did, or has it evolved over time?
"There are so many facets to people. There is a generation that may have short attention spans but there's also a generation of people that have longer attention spans. We try to cater to everyone. And thus, it's about evolving or [otherwise] being extinct. I guess our task is always to try and evolve, to keep up with what's going on and what people are interested in and what people want to see... and doing that to the best of our capabilities."

There are numerous GRM events now, with the Gala and the Rated Awards. Why are those so important and what would you say is the best reflection of what GRM does?
"I think our consistency in general is the best thing that we have because you can do a Gala, you can do an awards show, you can have the biggest YouTube channel for British music. You can do all these things, but can you do it every day? Can you do it every year? That's the difficulty and the [biggest] hurdle. That consistency is our biggest strength, as opposed to an isolated achievement. We're lucky enough to have jobs that we love and care about and are genuinely interested in. That's enough motivation to carry on maintaining that level of consistency."

Has the more brand-focused side of the offering grown at the expense of spotlighting new acts on the platform?
"Our relationships with brands allows us to be able to invest back into our culture and do things like the GRM Gala or the Rated Awards, or all the other stuff that we do. Those are all things that help us progress. It's part of the engine."

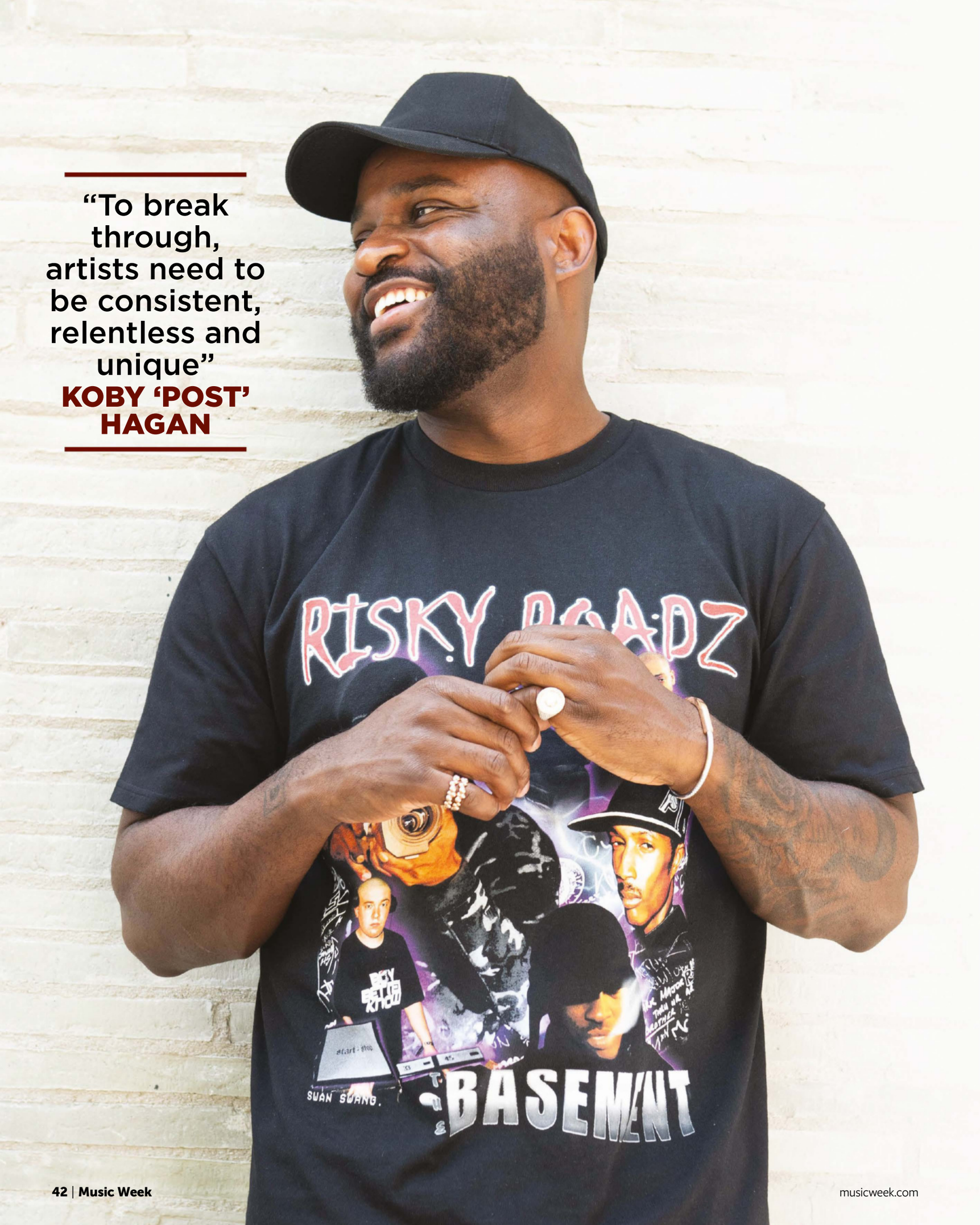
You spoke to *Music Week* in 2022 about your role in breaking acts. Does GRM still do that? Which recent breaking success stories have you been a part of?
"One of my favourites over recent years is probably Clavish. He had been dropping music on the platform for years and brought a lot of attention to it. Hopefully we were able to bring attention to him as well. I think it's a special relationship that we have with artists. It's a 50/50 relationship that we've always had in terms of bringing recognition to each other. We're really grateful to be in that position. Strandz has done really well recently. Even Central Cee had his initial break on GRM. Those are the ones we champion to this day."

How valuable is Daily Duppy for artists these days? You still get the established stars as well as newcomers doing them...
"I'd say the Daily Duppy is almost as important or more important than it's ever been. Recently we have had freestyles by Nines and Central Cee that entered the Top 40, which speaks to what Daily Duppy means to the culture and what it can contribute to artists. It's definitely one of our most important assets."

How healthy is the UK rap scene? Dave, Central Cee and D-Block Europe are achieving mainstream success on a regular basis, but are there enough mainstream rap stories right now?
"I think it's the most fruitful it's ever been. I just think that with

PHOTOS: Jed Cullen/Dave Benett, Getty

"There is too much focus on money and income in the industry now"
KOBY 'POST' HAGAN



"To break through, artists need to be consistent, relentless and unique"

KOBY 'POST' HAGAN

anything, there's always growing to do and there's more inclusion to [achieve]. Although it's the most fruitful it's ever been for creating opportunities for people that have already established themselves, new artists need to be also given opportunities and more support. And I think that we can grow even more."

Postal service: (*Clockwise from top*) *Koby 'Post' Hagan with YouTube's global head of music Lyor Cohen after winning the platform's Legacy Award last year, at a GRM birthday event this year and at the Rated Awards in 2017*

AJ Tracey and Headie One, to name two recent examples, are coming back with new music this year. How do you feel the next phases of the careers of this generation of rappers will evolve?
"Those two artists are pioneers and have achieved – and will continue to achieve – amazing things. They have a massive core audience. But there's also always room and space for new artists to grow and have opportunity. That's always a part of our mission statement so it's always going to be a focus for us. There are a lot of new artists that we're currently behind; you can see them on our platform week in week out. Our GRM Premieres showcase a lot of the new artists that we really champion. We really like Nemzzz at the moment; he's doing incredible things."

Has the recent boom in UK rap – so powerfully personified by Stormzy with his various award wins, No.1 records and Glastonbury headline slot – died down a bit now? Or have the key players just changed?
"Stormzy has been great for so long and it's just nice to see him accomplish the impossible and set a precedent where he's doing things that have never been done before. He's just opened his #MERKY FC youth community centre in his hometown of Croydon. And beyond music, GRM wants to be a representation of life so we can only look at that and admire it and respect it."

What do new rappers need to break? What needs to be in place for it to work?
"They need consistency. They need to be unique, and they need to be relentless. Talented, of course, but I think it's the same thing new artists have always needed and will continue to need. It's the same principles really. Or just be lucky sometimes, I suppose."

Are artists embraced enough by the powers that be? From DSPs, to festival bookers, to the authorities?
"I think they are, but I also think that there's room for improvement in all of those areas. And there will always need to be improvement in some way, which the powers that be have to continuously manage and be aware of. I do know that we've definitely made progress as a culture and a community. Time is a relevant factor, but I feel like with time, with information and education and with the precedents that a lot of leaders are setting – like Stormzy – things can only improve."

Can you name the one piece of advice you would give to someone who wants to be an executive or manager on how to succeed in this business?
"Find what you're passionate about and believe in, and commit yourself to it. Be ready to learn. Don't be too hard on yourself when you take any failures or lessons. With those things, anybody could be a good exec. In my experience, I've just had to learn and succeed to the best of my abilities. My commitment to and passion for the cause is where my success comes from."

GRM has released a number of records through your partnership with Parlophone. Where is the label at right now and what are the plans for its future?
"We dabble every now and again in putting out records. We're not as committed as we once were in that field, but that could change any minute with the right talent. But we definitely have the infrastructure to operate when and where the time is right. We just want to release music that we're really passionate about and believe in."

Will you ever go and work at a label full time? You must have had offers over the years...
"I haven't, to be fair. But I think that's because people know that I just don't have the capacity; I'm full time at GRM and I always have been."

What has kept you at GRM for 15 years, and how long do you think you will stay?
"I feel like everybody at GRM *is* GRM, especially me. So, it would be hard to leave myself, because I'm so passionate about what I do. I can understand that from the outside point of view it does look like a business, and it is. But I think because I have a closer view of it, I know that it's more personal."

Are there any moments in GRM history that have stood out the most to you?
"In the first year of GRM existing, The Independent put us in their top 25 music websites in the world. That was pretty cool because to be in a newspaper at the time was a very difficult task to achieve. But it was so organic and one of those things that made us feel like what we were doing was a real thing. So that was quite a big deal."

Finally, what is on the agenda for GRM for the rest of 2024 as you celebrate 15 years?
"A few surprises that will hopefully capture people's attention. Enhancing the things that we've done before and making them even better experiences. And just growing not only as a company but as people, trying to do the best we can to support the cause that we believe in."

PHOTOS: Dave Benett, Dave J Hogan, Getty

"The artist has to come first, because without them none of us would be here"
CATHERINE MARKS

FULL MARKS

Over a career that spans two decades, **Catherine Marks** has carved out a position as one of the industry's most prominent producers, renowned for both her work in the studio and as a campaigner. Here, in celebration of all she has achieved, the **Grammy**-winning mastermind behind records by **Boygenius**, **Wolf Alice** and more discusses representation, conquering her fears and what the industry must do to support those behind the scenes...

WORDS: CORAL WILLIAMSON **PHOTOS:** PHOEBE FOX

Catherine Marks likes a challenge. From her role as executive director at the Music Producers Guild, to appearing onstage with Boygenius at Gunnersbury Park in West London last year ("That was the most terrifying experience of my life," she laughs), the Grammy-winning producer seems to enjoy throwing herself at things that terrify her, and that are important to her.

Her industry journey has practically been mythologised by this point: she rose to fame after meeting producer and long-time mentor Flood (U2, Depeche Mode, Smashing Pumpkins, Nine Inch Nails, The Killers) at a Nick Cave gig in Dublin, while studying for a degree in architecture in her native Australia. After finishing her studies, she found herself in London working for Flood and his collaborator Alan Moulder, learning her craft as an engineer on records by the likes of PJ Harvey, Foals, The Killers and more.

Marks has since worked with an array of talent that also encompasses Boygenius (with whom she tasted her first Grammy success in 2023), Alanis Morissette, Wolf Alice, The Big Moon, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, The Amazons and more. Alongside her Grammys, Marks has been honoured at events including the MPG Awards and the Resonator Awards. She says that there are overlaps in what she learned in architecture compared to production.

"One of the fundamentals is how I'm able to visualise stuff in three dimensions," Marks explains. "But also it's interpreting a brief, underlying meanings and just giving something depth. When you're designing a house, you're like, 'This all looks really cool, but how does it relate to the landscape? How does it relate to the elements? How am I supposed to feel when I'm inside this space?'"

Marks says that's how she feels in the studio.

"When I'm listening to something, [I think], 'How am I supposed to feel? How am I experiencing this?' Or, 'How should I direct people to experience this?'" she continues. "So yeah, there are definitely those kinds of parallels."

When we chat, Marks is fighting jet lag, having just returned home to London from recording in LA with Rise Against for their 10th album.

"I can't talk about it too much, but the process was amazing; they wanted to push the boat out," she smiles. "It's great when a band that has been going for 20 years can have that kind of career and then come to someone like me at that point in their story."

Unsurprisingly, Marks is well used to international to-ing and fro-ing. She made a 24-hour visit to London from LA in April to pick up the Producer Of The Year gong at the MPG Awards, and is about to jet off again to start work on the

next Manchester Orchestra record, having produced their fifth album, A Black Mile To The Surface.

Today though, the in-demand producer is devoting her precious downtime to *Music Week*.

And so, in a career-spanning conversation, we discuss everything from the sad news of Steve Albini's passing and whether producers get enough recognition, to how industry support must improve and the changing role of women in the studio...

On your Marks: *(Above, L-R) Catherine Marks at the Grammys and the Music Producers Guild Awards; (below) with Bishi Bhattacharya*

You're now two decades into your career – do you ever take time to reflect on what you've done?

"It's funny, I feel like I haven't celebrated the little moments of success as much as I should [have]. I've got a week off at the moment and my Grammy arrived while I was away. I picked it up yesterday and went out with some friends last night who are not related to the music industry, and I was able to get excited about something that had happened to me with people who would not take that for granted. It felt like a special moment; often if I win an award or something, I'll be like, 'Oh, I'm not worthy.' It sometimes has the opposite effect. It's always a mixed bag of emotions when these things happen. I look back at all the sacrifices I've made and how hard I've worked, but I'm at a point in my career where I love every project that I get to work on and everything feels so exciting. But on the other hand, I've sometimes suddenly experienced imposter syndrome, which I'm sure a lot of people who work in creative areas do."

Do you feel as if you've got to carry on working, just to make sure you've definitely earned all of these accolades?

"Yeah, exactly. Because the moment you think you know everything, suddenly you're like, 'Oh my gosh, I have so much more to learn.' Which is also why this job is so fun. You're constantly being challenged and pushed and thrown in the deep end, out of your comfort zone, all those sorts of things."

Your accomplishments now extend to guesting on stage with Boygenius. How did it feel to recreate the scream you recorded on the track $20 on stage at Gunnersbury Park last summer?

"That was the most terrifying experience of my life. I knew I had to say 'yes' when they asked me to do it because I was like, 'This is an experience I can't give up.' But I'm pretty sure I was hyperventilating at the side of the stage before going on and then as soon as I walked out I think I blacked out. But then I just came to and I'm screaming and I see their three faces beaming back at me and I'm like, 'Oh my God, this chorus is still going, I still have to carry on screaming.' And then, once it was over, I realised no one cared and no one knew who I was. But it was fun for me to do. It's good to put yourself in terrifying situations because once you've done it, it's like, 'Oh, I want to do that again.'"

When it comes to being in the spotlight, how do nights like the Grammys compare to the more industry-facing awards shows?

"I think the MPG Awards, because that's voted for by your peers, there's something different in that. I also won Powerhouse Of The Year at the inaugural Resonator Awards, started by Emily Lazar and We Are Moving The Needle. They were celebrating women in music and that felt really special because there was no fear of tokenism. When I won Producer Of The Year at the MPG Awards [in 2018], I was like, 'I wonder if I've won just because I'm a woman.' That's horrible to think that really, isn't it? I was reassured that was not the case, absolutely. There's sometimes a little bit in my mind where I'm like, 'Am I just getting wheeled out because it satisfies the diversity aspect?' But that's incredibly cynical. So at the Resonator Awards, I just thought it was this awesome room of all these incredibly talented women who were doing really well, and to be among those and be celebrated was really special. There was so much love in the room."

In terms of the way you go about your actual work as a producer, has that changed at all in the wake of your successes?

"The first approach will either come from the artist, the management or the label. The best projects that I work on are where the team leaders are the artists themselves, because if anyone but the artist is imposing what their expectations are, or when they differ to what the artists' are, then the work that you're creating becomes a compromise. I tend to protect the process in the studio, and if management or the label have any sort of input or desires, I try and make sure that it comes through me and that there's an open dialogue. Before I even choose whether I'm going to do the project, I make sure everyone on the team is on the same page. Because it's very difficult if the artist wants to make a Bowie or Prince-ish record and someone else on the team is like, 'It's not hip-hop enough.' Everyone needs to be very clear about the kind of record that they want to make."

Is it ever difficult to preserve that clarity in the studio?

"I made some major mistakes early on in my career and one of them was not listening to what the others wanted. And I ended up losing that project. After I'd realised that essentially getting fired from that project wasn't going to ruin my career, I took a learning experience away from it, which was that the artist has to come first, because without them none of us would be there. It's because of their identity, because of their unique character, that's what makes them who they are. And if we're trying to make it sound like something else, then that's not going to work. As the years have gone on, I've tried very hard to make sure that artists are allowed to see their hopes and dreams [come] to fruition. It can sometimes really derail a project if someone who is outside the process comes in and says, 'Ah, but you know, what about trying this?'"

How do you manage those situations?

"I really like communicating with the team outside the artist as well, to make sure that they're all happy and they have what they need to make the next steps work. Because of course, once you've made a record, it could be the best record in the world, but if no one's going to hear it... So, you have to make sure everyone is on board."

PHOTOS: Jed Cullen/Dave Benett, Kayla Caddams/Stringer Getty, Scott Garfitt

"I'm trying to give more importance back to the process of making records"
CATHERINE MARKS

"When it comes to women in the studio, what's frustrating is politicising the issue, rather than celebrating people's achievements"
CATHERINE MARKS

Steve Albini recently passed away and there was a huge outpouring from the music world, but do you think producers get the recognition they deserve while they're still working?
"[Steve] would be of the generation of producers, as were my mentors like Flood and Alan [Moulder], where it wasn't about the producers, they wouldn't do press. Even when I first started back in 2005, it was really uncommon for a producer to do press. I remember Paul Epworth did a small interview in NME about working with The Futureheads. I was standing in the studio and other producers were going, 'What does he think he's doing? This is outrageous.' In my experience, the last 20 years have seen a lot more recognition from a press point of view of producers. That was definitely something that I wanted to push, because when I started in the industry it also coincided with streaming, budgets declining and schedules getting much smaller. As a result, we're trying to give more importance back to the process of making records, to give value to that, so people could see that there was value in it. But to answer your question, Steve Albini was probably not awarded enough for his contribution to music, because he has made some of the most seminal and influential records of our time. I think he deserves a lot more recognition."

You've mentioned your mentors, Flood and Alan Moulder. Do you feel like you have reached a position where you are a mentor to others?
"Yeah, I have engineers and assistants who I've worked with from the beginning of their careers and now I see them flourishing on their own. I want to give back, in the same way that I had all these amazing producers who took the time and had the patience to teach me things and encourage me. I would always hope that I would be doing the same for the next generation."

You've also spent a lot of your career advocating for better treatment and recognition of female producers. Are you tired about being asked about being a female producer at this point?
"I know a lot of us are, and have been for a while actually. I do understand that the conversation is important and always will be, because it appears as if there are not that many women in the industry. And I understand that there are these percentage figures, but that [relates to] what is in the charts... I think there are a lot of people who are producing who might not necessarily be working on the kind of music that would chart. I know that I don't all the time. There are a lot more of us than people seem to think. Also, what's frustrating is politicising that, rather than celebrating the achievements of the women who are doing really well, to encourage the next generation. I wish there was more of that."

Does that desire feed into your role at the MPG?
"That's another amazing challenge. I didn't know the amount of work that needed to be done, so once I started, it just got under my skin how much important stuff they do in representing producers and engineers in the industry. We're their voice when it comes to parliament passing legislation that impacts the music industry. This is my way of giving back, because it's all voluntary as well. It's a lot of hours, a lot of work and the team work really, really hard at loads of different aspects of it."

Producing the goods: *Catherine Marks at the Resonator Awards with Phoebe Bridgers, Julien Baker and Lucy Dacus of Boygenius (top) and celebrating signing to Universal Music Publishing Group this year (bottom)*

What would you say your proudest moment has been as part of the MPG?
"I loved guest-editing Sound On Sound magazine's Change Makers edition last year, which was celebrating women and non-binary [producers]. The reason I wanted to do it was because I think part of the issue with there not being a lot of female representation on this side of the desk has to do with the decision makers at the top. You know, an artist says to their label, 'Oh, I'd really love to work with a woman, do you know of any producers?' And they're like, 'Oh, no, I don't.' Just because you can't think of anyone doesn't mean there isn't someone out there. Labels are always looking for the next young thing who's coming up, and whether it's a guy or a girl, it shouldn't matter. I just wanted to highlight the women who were doing really well, and show the industry that there were a lot. We could have included 50 or 60 people on the cover, but as it was, there were only a few people who could turn up on the day to do the shoot. That was another challenge that I spent time on – and I only say that because I seem to take on a lot more commitments than I actually have time for! There are few free weekends, but I do enjoy it and it's important as well."

In your opinion, who are the women working on your side of the desk that we should be paying particular attention to at the moment?
"Steph Marziano is amazing. I think I'm about to do a co-production with her, which I'm really excited about. Marta Salogni is killing it as well, I just love what she does. Manon Grandjean is an amazing mixer, she won at the MPG Awards this year, too. Jennifer Decilveo in the States is also incredible, and Alex Hope from Australia. There's also Laura Sisk, who is an engineer and mixer and works with Jack Antonoff."

What should the wider industry be doing to lift producers of any gender up more?
"I think it's about respecting the process. Traditionally, the producer's role was there to help carry the burden – of the pressure, the finances, the budget, schedule – as well as facilitate for the artist to achieve whatever it is that they wanted to achieve. The roles outside the studio and the roles inside the studio are constantly evolving, so it's about working together with the producers and the artists, and supporting them as they throw their blood, sweat and tears into something, and having a little bit of compassion...This is a very convoluted way of saying, 'Just tell us we're amazing.' Because often, we'll just need to hear it."

Finally, what is the one area that the music business should increase its focus on right now? Is there anything that isn't talked about that bugs you more than anything else?
"I would love to talk about mental health in our industry, because we talked a lot about it around the pandemic, and I think it has fallen off the radar a little bit. Even though we as producers are in a support role, we're still creatives as well, and we need that sort of level of support, understanding and compassion in the industry. Around the pandemic, deadlines had been stretched out and people were a lot more understanding of what others were going through. But we've just gone back to business as usual and the lessons we learnt through that time have been lost a little bit, so we need a little reminder of that."

PHOTOS: Rich Polk, Universal Music Publishing Group

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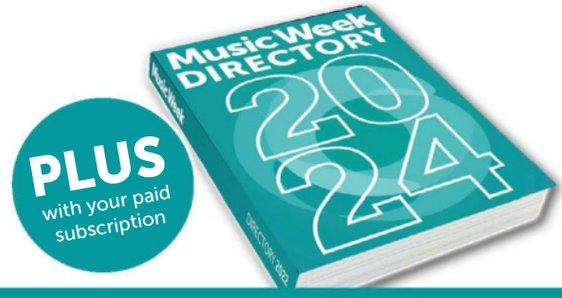

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MUSIC WEEK X GIRLS I RATE PRESENTS

CURATED BY GIR'S CARLA MARIE WILLIAMS

MENTOR ME

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ACROSS THE MUSIC AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SHARE THEIR TOP 5 CAREER LESSONS...

WHITNEY ASOMANI (FOUNDER, TWENTY:TWO AGENCY)

Meet Whitney Asomani, who, over 15 years, has worked in several disciplines, including celebrity and events PR and TV – where she was a music executive at ITV and in management at BT Sport – before transitioning full-time into music. Asomani has championed a number of UK acts throughout her career, including girl group MO, while at Sony she saw success with artists from RCA and Since '93, before leaving in 2020 to co-manage the return of the Sugababes with Matt Johnson. In the same year, she co-founded the music marketing agency Twenty:Two Agency – which has overseen a roster of stars including Doja Cat, Zara Larsson, NSG and more. Asomani has featured on Shesaid.so's Alternative Power 100 Music List, been nominated for Manager Of The Year at the Music Week Awards and was inducted into the Roll Of Honour at the Women In Music Awards in 2023. Here, she shares her top career tips...

1. Explore different roles

"Learn as much as you can about the different roles in the industry, so you can understand what suits your passions. When I started, no one gave me a leg up. I wanted to work in PR, so I did, then I moved into TV. If I hadn't done those things, I wouldn't have found what it is that I wanted to do. The knowledge I gained made me a well-rounded executive. I'm so glad that I took that route because of what I learnt out there, as well as the contacts I made."

2. There are various routes to management

"For managers getting into the field, there are a few options. You can apply to management companies where you learn the business and benefit from existing structures, but if you're put with an artist who you don't gravitate towards, it could be disadvantageous. A lot of new managers I'm seeing now are out there finding artists on things like TikTok, which is great, because at that point, what you can offer them is companionship. If you're business-savvy or have a creative eye, you'll also know how you can add value to what they're doing."

3. Resilience is No.1

"As a manager, you're not always earning money. You might do a lot of work and be waiting a long time for your pay cheque to come, so you need to be resilient and have a strategy for your artist. If you trust yourself and the plan you've set, you know that you'll get yourself from point A to point B. But that might not be one step, it could be many, and might take a few years!"

4. Be ready to adapt

"You have to know when it's time to change lanes. Adaptability is a key skill in managing, marketing and just being a person in the industry – it's not just studio sessions, it's about negotiating deals, strategies and asking, 'What is our road to success?' I'm constantly learning and reading what people are saying about the business; it's important to stay informed and know when it's time to pivot."

5. No project is worth burnout

"I have had burnout on multiple occasions. Sometimes it takes a negative interaction for you to be like, 'OK, this feels like a step over my boundaries. Yes, I have a job to do and yes, I have an agency, but first and foremost, I'm a human being.' It's important that you work with people who respect you; running yourself into the ground for a project or a client is going to create a very short-lived career. Know when to push yourself to the next milestone, but also know when to exit!"

"Work with people who respect you; running yourself into the ground for a project or client is going to create a short-lived career"

WHITNEY ASOMANI

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INTERVIEW: Miranda Bardsley

“Mental health is about expressing yourself, so our industry is always going to attract people that are prone to anxiety or depression”

Since taking on the newly created role of director of artist and employee wellbeing for **Sony Music UK** in 2021, **Elton Jackson** has helped oversee an inspirational change in the way the major approaches caring for its artists and staff, and he believes others are following suit. Here, the trained psychotherapist, ex-Samaritan and one-time rave aficionado offers up his take on industry pressure points and outlines how we can preserve the health of the business...

WORDS: ANNA FIELDING **PHOTOS:** JOE MAGOWAN

Elton Jackson has some of the best ears in the business. Those words are usually used in praise of A&R executives, but Jackson does his listening in his role as director of artist and employee wellbeing for Sony Music UK. He’s a trained psychotherapist with many years of experience and has worked for The Samaritans, while he has also performed on Top Of The Pops and worked on the door at The Haçienda.

“There’s something about all of my experience that has enabled me to come into Sony and sit well with all the teams and the artists,” says Jackson, who has been in place since November 2021, the same year the major launched its Artists Forward and Artist Assistance schemes, both of which are aimed at supporting its roster in terms of wellness provision and career resources.

“To the best of our knowledge, this is the first in-house role of its kind within the industry,” he adds.

We find Jackson in an upper-floor meeting room in Sony’s Kings Cross offices in London. He’s embedded within the culture of the organisation and – with his sharply trimmed beard and fingers full of silver rings, including an acid house smiley – is surely a visible presence in the building.

“I’m the first point of contact for an artist or an employee who’s struggling with their mental health,” he explains.

And being around helps. People seeking his assistance have approached him in the lift and in the canteen, as well as through more official channels.

“As a psychotherapist, I always emphasise [the fact] that anything said to me is confidential and that it will always remain confidential within Sony as well,” he says. “If anybody comes to speak with me, it remains between me and them, unless they want to talk about it with anybody else.”

He describes his journey towards psychotherapy as “quite a story”, one that began on the dancefloors of Manchester as acid house began to boom. When he was 10, Jackson and his mother had moved to the North West from Bristol, and he was “just a whippersnapper” when he found his people in clubland.

“I’ve always loved music and fashion and getting dressed up,” he explains. “I became a bit of a face on the scene – infamous, really. I did the door at The Haçienda and at a club called Most Excellent with Justin Robertson and The Chemical Brothers before they were even called The Chemical Brothers.”

His face began appearing in magazines, while people started to ask if he could sing or play, to which his response was a charmingly bold, “I could try”.

This all led to him becoming the live frontman for house act The Grid for five years, touring and appearing on TOTP. The appearance for the band's hit Swamp Thing in 1994 shows him wearing a crown of dangling safety pins and a T-shirt that reads 'NO PAIN, NO GAIN'.

"I think having been an artist is really important in my role now," he says. "I've been along with all the excitement and the let-downs in the industry. I tried a solo career, which didn't really do anything, and that really hit me at the time."

That lack of traction as a solo artist meant a change of direction. He found intense fulfilment working for emotional support charity The Samaritans. It took the encouragement of friends to apply for a psychotherapy course: Jackson had been concerned that his dyslexia would hold him back as it had at school. Instead, he thrived, going on to consult with various businesses, and work as the clinical director of SurvivorsUK, a charity supporting men who have experienced sexual violence. He also developed his own private practice and then went on to join Sony.

"I've been in place for two-and-a-half years now, and it's really exciting," he says. "There was already a good culture here, so I landed in fertile soil."

Here, *Music Week* takes on the listening role to quiz Jackson about his work at Sony and industry issues around mental health...

Elton the move: *Elton Jackson with Sony Music director of diversity, inclusion and social impact Charlotte Edgeworth (top) and on a BPI panel with BBC DJ Jess Iszatt (bottom)*

What first drew you to your role at Sony?

"A friend in the business alerted me to it, so it felt safe. I was initially cautious, because of having been asked to do various things in the past. I'm mixed race, I'm gay, I'm from a working-class background and I've been on Top Of The Pops. I can tick a lot of boxes for people. But I soon found out that this wasn't a tick-box exercise and the people who interviewed me were hungry for someone to be in this role, someone with proper training, someone who had done it, someone who had also been in therapy. They wanted to do it properly. Then I sat down with the CEO & chairman Jason Iley and we really hit it off. I knew this was something that I could get my teeth into and [would facilitate] positive changes, especially because I would be in-house and really part of the culture."

How would you sum up attitudes towards mental health in the rest of the business? There have been high-profile artists speaking out, such as Lewis Capaldi, Arlo Parks and Sam Fender, but what are the current conversations?

"I actually think it's broader than just this industry; we have to look at the rest of society, at politics, at what's going on in the rest of the world. All of that impacts our wellbeing. And then music very often suits certain people or gives them a sense of identity. Recent research has shown that if you're an artist or an employee within the music industry, you're three times more likely to suffer from anxiety or depression or a neurological presentation. That really makes sense to me. I think mental health is about expressing yourself. And so I think we're always going to draw more people that are prone to anxiety, depression and neurodiversity into the music industry, because that's how they get their feelings met, to some extent. The other thing that's exciting, industry-wise, is that these conversations are actually being had. We work hard to promote the work we do at Sony. I've been on panels, this interview raises the profile again. And our younger artists aren't just at the forefront of what's going on musically; they're talking about mental health far more, too. Generation Z are talking about it much more than my generation."

What are your main aims at Sony?

"I don't think there's a beginning, middle and end, because I believe therapeutic intervention and community culture is something that you just need to keep feeding into. I want to do more of the same but better. I do workshops and training sessions, and so on, and that gives me a great path to the community here. And then somebody will come to my training and say, 'My department's going through this,' or, 'We need some help on that'. And I'll go away and put some bespoke training together for that specific need. There'll be a private piece of work with that label or that department. And that has worked rather well. There are also a couple of projects I'm working on that I can't actually talk about at the moment, but they're quite exciting and they will probably take the role here, within Sony, up a notch again."

In the time you have been in the role, have you seen any kind of cultural shift?

"There was a lot of work already in place, up and running before I got here. But what has really stood out is the quality of the internal relationships. Obviously, I can't speak about what was going on before I arrived. But clearly, it was warm. But I think the bit that surprised me is the depth of relationship I'm building with people here, whether that's been because of a specific mental health issue or an artist, or whether we've done a project together. There's people in this building that I'm probably going to know for the rest of my life. I guess what I would hope to do is to embed more of that as a culture because, as the saying goes, you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. We can have difficult conversations here, but I think we can have those conversations because we've got the culture that we've got."

Speaking in general terms, what are the issues that people come to you with most frequently?

"Again, it's about looking at the wider world outside of our industry and one of the biggest things we have put a lot of time and effort into thinking about is ADHD, autism and those sorts of neurodiverse conditions. Some people, at the outset, can feel very

"My role is about creating a culture that can catch someone when they fall"

ELTON JACKSON SONY MUSIC

PHOTOS: Kris Humphreys, JMNI

frightened of those titles and names, and diagnosis can feel quite scary. We aim to take the sting out of that. And there has been an influx of people wanting those discussions... We've also done a lot of work around anxiety. We're all human beings, we all have the capacity for depression and anxiety within us, the point is how do you manage it if it becomes overwhelming? It's all about getting to know yourself so that you can see the signs before you go right, deep down. We're doing something pre-emptive, as opposed to trying to catch up with something that's already happened. It's all about not having a beginning, middle and end; it's about creating a culture that can catch someone when they fall."

> "I wish the government would get behind the creative industries to support up-and-coming artists"
>
> **ELTON JACKSON SONY MUSIC**

Do you find that artists have different concerns to people working on the label side?

"I think it's a mixture. As Jason Iley always says, 'We don't just sign artists, everyone who works here is an artist.' And there is a real truth to that. But someone's anxieties will take a different form. If you're standing on a stage in front of 5,000 people, you will have different concerns to someone working on a label."

You may not be standing on stage, but you might have just signed off on a budget worth millions...

"Exactly, that's a good point. We might think that a missed email is going to derail everything and will have terrible knock-on effects. But, obviously, things occasionally do go wrong and what we have and want to continue to foster is a culture where it's all hands on deck to help with a solution and not attack-attack-attack. We need supportive teams around everyone – artists or staff."

At the beginning of this year, you told *Music Week* that the industry "could be on the cusp of something amazing" and start putting people first. Do you stand by that?

"The conversations are happening, that's the important thing. There has got to be the will for things to move, and the industry as a whole is definitely moving. People contact me from all sorts of different areas of the music industry saying, 'What do you know about this?' There are collaborative exchanges with people like Music Minds Matter or Help Musicians. Mental health is at the forefront of conversations within the industry at the moment and it's not happening in other industries. We do seem to be leading; I think other corporates are way behind. That's not to say other industries don't have stuff in place, but we're probably doing more and I guess that's because we're dealing with human beings all the time. We're dealing with artists, we're dealing with creativity. Human emotions are our product, that is what we're selling."

All being well: *Elton Jackson with Sabrina Kristiansen, director of marketing at Relentless (top) and Sony director of Africa, Taponeswa Mavunga (bottom)*

What has your biggest challenge been in this job so far? And how did you get through it?

"I think the perceived challenge was being accepted, actually, because, having trauma in my own background and being who I am, being mixed race, being gay, dressing a certain way and all that kind of stuff, means a lot of my experience has been about rejection. It has been a challenge to try and make connections with some people in my life, historically. To some extent, I thought that might go on here. But that's just not [been] the case. If anything, I still panic about writing a document, for instance, because I'm still dyslexic, although I've got ways around it and I can write better now than I ever used to. But it's still a massive challenge."

You have talked about a culture of accepting mistakes – can you extend that kind of compassion to your own mistakes? Have you made any notably big ones?

"The bedrock of being a psychotherapist is to make sure you're well enough to do it. And I do put that high on my agenda. It would be ridiculous if I was to say to somebody, 'You need to take some time off work because someone's died in your family', and then I didn't take time off work myself because someone was dying. You have to model the ways in which a person looks after themselves. I fall over all the time and I get things wrong. And I'm the first person to put my hand up and go, 'Actually, I'm going to be late on that deadline.' I do fuck up. Hopefully, at the tender age of 51, I don't make catastrophic mistakes. I've been around the block a little bit, I see things coming."

Are there still misconceptions around mental health? And if so what's the biggest one?

"That it can be cured in two sessions. Look at the NHS, for instance. Everything is about CBT [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy] and that short, sharp method. CBT can be absolutely brilliant for getting somebody out of a really sticky moment, a bad patch. But it doesn't last, or it very rarely lasts. You then need to go and have long-term therapy and get to the root cause."

Finally, what are your hopes for the future? What's next in your quest with Sony?

"It's a very big question. The recent Misogyny In Music report was an important piece of government work and unfortunately, they concluded they weren't really going to take on the suggestions that were made. That was so disappointing because we were working hard to change what's going on in our workforce. It doesn't mean they won't change their minds, but I can't read the future. So I hope our bigger leaders, outside of our business, would support the music industry to keep moving in the direction that it's going. I wish the government would get behind the creative industries and support our up-and-coming artists, whether it's in music, film or whatever it is, to get those people out there showing off what they can do. And getting our industries really up and running because there's so much talent out there. Without the proper support behind it, people fall through the cracks."

PHOTO: Richard Young

YOUNG AT HEART

Fresh from being crowned **Independent Publisher Of The Year** at the **Music Week Awards**, **Young Songs** is on the crest of a wave. The company formed just five years ago, but has already seen huge success for **Sampha**, **Arlo Parks**, **Cadenza** and more. Here, *Music Week* meets MD **Gerard Phillips** and Young COO **Chloë Roberts** to talk independence, the benefits of a small roster and the secrets behind their organisation's unique chemistry...

WORDS: NIALL DOHERTY **PHOTOS:** LOUISE HAYWOOD-SCHIEFER

Young Songs don't necessarily have a company motto, but there is a guiding principle that defines everything the fledgling outfit does: locate and nurture the best talent possible.

It's an ethos, says Young COO Chloë Roberts, that runs right the way through each arm of Young, the music and arts organisation that grew out of the Young Turks record label that was formed by Caius Pawson in 2006 (the label abbreviated its name simply to Young in 2021). The operation also includes management (Young Artists) and a state-of-the-art creative hub (Young Space, located in East London).

For Young Songs, which counts Arlo Parks and Sampha among its roster, it means aligning themselves with writers who are naturally collaborative and for whom songwriting is their primary passion.

MD Gerard Phillips, who co-founded the company with Pawson in 2019, explains further.

"For us, there are so many different facets and areas of songwriting," he says. "And that's through artists with their own work, featuring on other people's projects, writing for other people, film scoring, bespoke ad work... all of those areas of songwriting are something that we feel, as a company, we've got a really good grounding [in, and are able] to bring those opportunities to the writers."

Those are just some of the reasons, Phillips believes, that explain why Young Songs won Independent Publisher Of The Year at the Music Week Awards 2024.

"It's an amazing thing to have achieved," he reflects. "We're five years into our tenure as a new publishing company so it's a big achievement, [considering that] obviously there was a lot of stellar competition on the nominee list."

Not really one to celebrate these sorts of things, Phillips was home with his dog by 11pm on the night of the ceremony. Roberts, though, kept the party alive.

"I was in the role of 'celebration officer'," she jokes. "We celebrated on the night with the people we were with. We were lucky enough to have one of our roster with us, Kwes Darko, and we were also on a table with our label colleagues at Beggars so it was a great big knees-up."

Phillips must have slept soundly that night, though. For him, the award was validation for his efforts. It was back in 2017, when he left his position heading up Songs Music Publishing in the UK, that Phillips made the decision to set up something new. Meeting up with Caius Pawson, he found someone thinking along similar lines.

"Our idea was that there are a lot of publishing companies out there, and the

"Our dream has always been to be the best boutique publishing company in the world"

GERARD PHILLIPS
YOUNG SONGS

When they were Young: *Gerard Phillips and Chloë Roberts, photographed for Music Week at Young Space in May 2024*

one thing we could offer that not many others could, if any, was that if we signed very few people and worked really closely with them, then they would have a much stronger chance of success," he says, referring to Young Songs' less-is-more roster policy. "We've managed to achieve that with all of the writers across the board."

Right from the off, Phillips was determined that Young Songs would be a publisher with a difference.

"We go against the grain of the traditional publishing model, which is to sign en masse," he says.

"It's very considered," adds Roberts. "We have very strong intentions and we know exactly the type of writer that excites us. It's someone who's more brilliant than we are, who's incredibly social and is going to get in the rooms they want to be in and where we can amplify everything around their work. When you have a very clear idea of who you want to work with, it makes everything a lot easier. It obviously limits the signings, but that's very intentional."

It's an approach that has paid off. There are only nine creators on Young Songs' roster but almost every one of them is out there changing the game. Amongst what he considers the company's chief successes, Phillips reels off the 2021 Mercury win for Arlo Parks as well as the singer's Grammy nominations, signing Grammy-winning Beyoncé and Doja Cat producer Cadenza, and the flourishing career of Kwes Darko.

But really, he feels like he could talk about every single one of them: the roster also includes Headie One and Pa Salieu collaborator Bkay; Spector frontman and songwriter-for-hire Fred Macpherson; synth-pop artist and pop songwriter Holly Fletcher (aka Låpsley); electronic producer Koreless; and Taylor Skye, one half of indie duo Jockstrap.

Phillips recalls first meeting Arlo Parks at the beginning of her career and the Collapsed In Sunbeams star explaining how she wanted to eventually write for other people in a more pop-leaning space. After the release of her 2023 second album My Soft Machine, they put it into practice.

"The first step was to help build that world around her and introduce her to amazing producers and songwriters in the pop world," he says. "It was people like Rob Bisel, Ilsey Juber, Caroline Ailin... getting her to understand what it was like being in that world. Arlo is an incredible writer and once she was in that environment, she excelled."

Parks has had extra-curricular cuts with Mura Masa and Glass Animals, and there's a forthcoming single with Khalid, but she really set out her stall by contributing to a centrepiece song on Beyoncé's landmark Cowboy Carter album – she co-wrote Ya Ya, a track co-produced by another Young Songs charge, Cadenza. It came about, Phillips explains, when Young Songs and the Beyoncé-owned Parkwood Entertainment teamed up to put together a songwriting camp.

"It was between myself and Mariel Gomerez, Beyoncé's A&R, to curate who would be part of the camp," he recalls. "It was Kwes Darko, Cadenza, Gift, Obongjayar and it was really fun – putting it on at Young Space also added something to it, too. We knew we had some really good songs coming out of that."

Phillips says he knew how much it meant particularly to Parks to have her first major writing credit as a Beyoncé cut.

"It was largely acknowledged as the best song on the

> "We have very strong intentions and we know exactly the type of writer that excites us"
>
> **CHLOË ROBERTS YOUNG**

Forever Young: *(L-R) Chloë Roberts, Kwes Darko, Caius Pawson and Gerard Phillips and (above right) Phillips, Roberts and Darko with Milo Cordell at the Music Week Awards 2024*

record, so from that perspective it's fucking brilliant, it's amazing," he says. "It is exactly what we wanted to do but once it has happened it's like, 'OK, cool, next!' It's great but it's not the be-all and end-all. It's exactly where we want these artists to be and these writers to be."

Key to what makes Young Songs tick is the space they afford their artists, as Phillips and Roberts explain.

"Everybody is different, but we generally don't overload them with lots of opportunities that don't fit," Phillips says. "It's all about understanding the songwriters and what they want to do, what environments they're best in, where they produce their best work – and we help finesse [all] that. We open the door for them and once the door is open, our job is done."

Creating the right environment for the right act also differs from one artist to the next, states Roberts.

"For some artists, it's meeting them on Hampstead Heath and going for a very long walk for two hours once a month, rather than saying, 'Right, let's get in the studio and talk about your next record!'" she says. "Or it could be a residential [stay], for them having time out and [having] nothing to do with music."

The trajectory of Young Songs' flagship signing Kwes Darko is a good example of how they foster close relationships with their artists. Phillips says the moment that the Slowthai and Sampa The Great producer became the first name on their roster was pivotal for the nascent company, a gold-standard indication of their intent.

"Signing Kwes was the one where it was, 'OK, we know what we can do, we know what we're really good at,'" states Phillips.

Darko is no longer solely an act on the books, though – he's also an employee, having joined Young Songs' A&R team. Roberts says it was a natural move for Darko and an apt demonstration of the vibe inside Young Space, the building the company renovated in De Beauvoir Town, East London, to house all of their varying projects.

"We have five studios; Kwes was looking for a new one and we wanted to have our studios for our artists, but also as a nurturing ground for the A&R team and Kwes is someone who naturally develops artists, he really enjoys that element," she says. "It wasn't necessarily strategic, but it's almost in the ether at Young. There's less of an employee/artist divide in general across the roster. At lunchtime, we're all together, whether that's Sampha coming out for lunch, Romy [Madley Croft, The xx singer and solo star] popping in, or Holly Fletcher... We're all eating together."

Roberts, who previously worked at First Access Entertainment, believes that there aren't many other places like Young.

"I come from a pop world where it's very much, 'Ooh, so and so is coming in today,' but there's something in the casual but elegant nature of the relationships here that fosters those [situations]," she says.

PHOTO: Will Ireland

"Also, Kwes is an incredible A&R," adds Phillips. "He's scouting talent every single day. The biggest achievement for the company so far is that the first signing to the publishing company is now working for us as an A&R, because that tells me that we're doing a good-enough job rather than the flipside, where they're trying to get out of the deal."

Roberts says it's reflective of Young's ethos that artists are able to peek behind the company curtain. There are no closed meetings.

"They get to see the back-end of the company and the way that Young operates because it is so artist-led in the decision-making," she says. "There was no issue with that from our point of view."

"Yeah, Kwes is in the A&R meetings, so you've got to be artist-friendly to have your signings in the A&R meetings!" Phillips says with a laugh. "There are lots of companies I've worked for in the past where I wouldn't put my artist anywhere near the A&R meetings!"

Similarly, Sampha was originally an intern at Young before his minimalist neo-soul made him a star. He maintained the association by signing to Young Songs three years ago. Roberts says you could consider him a case study for Young in the sense of how he's been allowed to hone his music over a long period of time.

"It sums it up," she says. "[He's] someone who has been allowed to develop his art in a very considered way at his [own] pace and yet with an incredible resource around him – and has now amplified his art on a global scale."

As much as Young Songs stands on its own two feet, Phillips gladly acknowledges the benefits of their partnership with Sony Music Publishing. It's a typical joint-venture situation, he says, where the company can sign composers directly as Young and run them through Sony on an admin level, or sign acts on a joint basis with Sony.

"It gives us the ability, from an artist perspective,

"Our deals allow the artist to live well and the company to invest over a long period of time"

CHLOË ROBERTS YOUNG

> "We go against the grain of the traditional publishing model, which is to sign en masse"
>
> **GERARD PHILLIPS YOUNG SONGS**

to really offer something that a lot of independents can't, which is amazing DSP rates around the world at source deals," he says. "Tim Major [co-MD] and David Ventura [president & co-MD] have been wholly supportive in everything we've done since day one and with Sarah Gabrielli [senior director, A&R] and Sarah Pickering [VP, creative, co-head, sync] in the UK, the team are great on the creative."

Phillips says the partnership means they get the best of both worlds.

"As an indie that works with a select number of artists and writers, [this arrangement] enables us to have the back-end side looked after in the best way possible, which I feel a major can do way better than an indie, in terms of the DSP rates, admin, registrations and collections worldwide," he explains.

The team share the industry-wide concern about fair remuneration for artists and Roberts says pressure is building for substantial reforms in terms of how revenues flow to publishers and therefore to creators. In the meantime, they say it's up to Young to help map out and develop long-term careers with their artists.

"From day one, we're invested in artist development, in any of our artists' businesses but particularly the publishing, and so the deals are modelled in a way that allows the artist to live but [also] allows the company to invest over a long period of time," says Roberts. "I think because the roster is so small or selective, even though it will grow, Gerard is able to really work with them to ensure the decisions that are being made in alignment with their artistic vision allow them to live and hopefully to live well. We're very skilful in how we manage financial modelling and the creative direction."

Phillips doesn't worry about the competition as such, he'd rather focus on what's in front of him, but he does feel some unease about how hard it's become to break new artists.

"The Top 40 is inundated with A-list artists who, regardless of what they release, will always be in the charts: the Dua Lipas, Beyoncés and Taylor Swifts – and there's no mid-tier of artists breaking in," he says. "It means what you end up with is a lot of developing artists, either signed or unsigned, and therefore a lot of producers and writers trying to work with them as well as the A-list artists. It's very hard to break in and work out how you're going to sustain your career."

Not that it is going to stop Young Songs adding to their roster. Their current plan is to sign two to three writers a year and Phillips says it's crucial that they maintain the scale and how they operate.

"If we lose that, we lose the ethos of why we started the company," he explains. "We're just looking for great writers, whether they are established, or even in the later stage of their career, that's great, or someone new and exciting making music we feel we've never heard before or is an amazing version of something that has gone in the past. Or if there's a catalogue-level artist..."

In a nutshell, Phillips says that Young is open to all possibilities.

"If there's any artist or writer in the world that wants what we can help them achieve, then nothing is off the table," he says.

However, they won't adopt a catalogue acquisition model, with the focus very much on artists operating in today's marketplace.

"We're going to create the catalogues," Roberts says. "We have to because we started with none!"

The first five years of Young Songs have been a triumph, but their sights are firmly set on the next five and beyond.

"Our dream has always been to be the best boutique publishing company in the world and we think we've had an amazing start, but we're still far off to a degree," says Phillips. "The next steps are to continue to build the roster writer by writer, employee by employee. We're going to invest more in the publishing company through staff and through roster. It makes you feel, 'This is something we can build that's a true legacy, rather than just building a cool publishing company.'"

Write aligned: *(Clockwise from top) Arlo Parks, Cadenza and Sampha*

PHOTOS: Amy Sussman, Getty, Jesse Crankston

PPL Turns 90

Way back in 1934, **Phonographic Performance Limited** was founded by **Decca** and **EMI** as a copyright collective for the UK music industry. Now, 90 years later, **PPL** operates at the heart of the business, still on a mission to ensure performers are fairly compensated. To kick off a special feature looking back at nine decades of evolution, CEO **Peter Leathem** outlines its crucial role and explains what the organisation means to him...

My first ever encounter with PPL was in 1990 when, on my first day in the litigation seat at the law firm Hamlin Slowe (now Hamlins LLP), I attended a conference about a copyright tribunal case related to the use of music on jukeboxes. More than a decade later, when Fran Nevrkla had taken the reins as CEO, he asked if I would consider running the PPL legal team and join his leadership team. It was an opportunity I couldn't turn down – not just because I love music, but because I could see the potential for PPL and the vision that Fran had for it.

"By the time I joined in 2002, PPL already had an almost 70-year history, having been formed in 1934 following a groundbreaking court case brought by EMI – then known as The Gramophone Company. The company won a legal action against a coffee shop in Bristol for playing records to its customers without the permission of the copyright owners. PPL came into being soon after and its principal role remains the same: to ensure those who invest their time, money and talent in the process of making music and performing it get fairly paid.

"When I joined, one of our first areas of focus was on the broadcast licences that both PPL, and the video company Video Performance Limited (VPL) for whom all staff also worked, had with the broadcast community. This involved significant negotiations with the likes of the BBC and ITV, as well as commercial radio, MTV Networks Europe and EMAP. I have very fond memories of that time working long hours and eating many late-night pizzas with my colleagues Tony Clark, director of licensing, and my first ever appointment at PPL, David Harmsworth, our future general counsel, with whom I worked for 20 years until he passed away due to cancer last year.

"We wanted to deliver a much fairer return from those licensing arrangements for our members and managed to do so by voluntary negotiations and building good relationships. They were important initial steps in starting to build the reputation of PPL.

"In the early years, I also had an important role in negotiating and delivering Fran Nevrkla's vision for a single home for record companies and performers at PPL. Following five years of negotiations, PPL merged in 2006 with two organisations representing performers – PAMRA and AURA – giving PPL sole responsibility for paying performers their UK earnings, as well as offering an international collection service for performers for the first time.

"By 2023, we had increased international collections for performers and rights-holders to £75.4 million, from virtually zero 20 years earlier.

"Only a third of the countries in the world currently have performance rights for record companies and performers, so I'm excited about the potential for further growth in this space.

"PPL's third income stream, public performance, experienced a landmark moment in 2018 when PPL PRS Ltd launched. This brought a whole new licensing experience to music users and saw PPL and PRS For Music join forces. It took us 84 years to get there – but only five years to pay out more than £1 billion in royalties.

"My time at PPL has been characterised by so many highs, not least working with such a talented team of individuals. Their collective love for music continually sees them go above and beyond for the rights-holders and performers whose music we feel privileged to represent.

"Moments like our 90th anniversary give us a chance to reflect on what has been achieved over the last nine decades and, importantly, to focus on where we're going next. And I know PPL will continue to use its voice and influence for good."

PHOTOS: PPL

PPL pleaser: *Peter Leathem with members of the PPL team and (inset) on the cover of Music Week to mark the PPL-PRS merger in April 2018*

Revenue rules

In the first of five pieces written by former *Music Week* editor Paul Williams, we begin our exploration of PPL's illustrious history and its impact on the industry by digging into the numbers behind its ever more impressive collections figures, both domestically and around the world...

Rather than living up to George Orwell's bleak Big Brother vision of a society of totalitarianism and mass surveillance, the year 1984 is now remembered as being a vintage time for British music with the likes of Duran Duran, Frankie Goes To Hollywood and Wham! topping the singles chart. It also marked the golden anniversary of PPL, which then proudly announced that in its first 50 years it had collected £69 million, more than half coming in the previous five years.

Adjusted for inflation, £69 million is worth around £215 million in today's money, which means that in real terms the music licensing company brought in less money across half a century than it collected on behalf of its performer and rights-holder members just last year. In 2023 it generated a record £283.5 million in revenue across its three areas of public performance and dubbing, broadcast and international, reflecting not only how much PPL has grown – especially during the last two decades – but its vital role in helping to drive the global neighbouring rights market to what is now a multi-billion-dollar industry.

These gains, firstly under Fran Nevrkla and since 2012 overseen by PPL's current CEO Peter Leathem, are truly astonishing. In the year Fran joined, in 2000, its annual licence fee income was £68.4 million. By 2010 this had more than doubled to £143.5 million and the following year surpassed £150 million for the first time. It took only until 2016 when Peter was several years into his run as CEO to surpass the £200 million barrier. Then in 2019, a year before the pandemic, PPL achieved its first annual revenue total above £250 million.

From the roll-out of industry-leading systems, increased efficiencies and more professionalism, to striking ever-improving licensing agreements and the development of international as a third meaningful revenue stream, there are multiple factors behind this remarkable growth that has made the money PPL now collects and distributes a vital revenue source, rather than what was once an afterthought, especially for record labels.

One huge step forward in recent years was the launch in February 2018 of PPL PRS Ltd, a joint venture with PRS For Music to administer public performance licensing for both recordings and compositions. The Leicester-based operation has been a game-changer, ending what had been more than eight decades of the two societies separately licensing pretty much the same businesses for the same use of music.

The likes of pubs, restaurants, shops, hotels and hairdressers could now be covered to play music with a single licence – TheMusicLicence. It is little wonder that Leathem described it as "without doubt the most ambitious project" PPL had undertaken so far.

The launch followed years of discussions and planning between the two organisations. However, just two years after being rolled out, almost everything suddenly stopped with many of the premises it licensed forced to close under a series of Covid-19 lockdowns. It is hard to imagine a sterner test for the then fledgling operation, but it rose to the task admirably, helping to support businesses by waiving licensing fees during lockdown periods. Now through this unprecedented setback, PPL PRS Ltd is showing its true worth, evidenced by its 2023 numbers, which for PPL showed an 11% year-on-year revenue increase to £111 million.

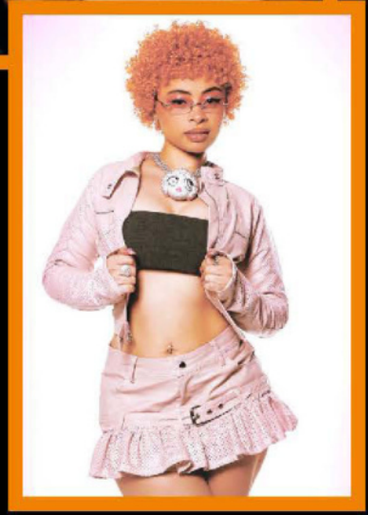
The collection area where PPL has seen the most rapid growth since the millennium is international. In Fran Nevrkla's first year in charge, annual international collections amounted to only around £5,000 – by 2023 the total was £75.4 million. This came a decade and a half after PPL had become the only performer-led organisation collecting internationally for UK performers and distributing revenue to overseas societies, rather than sharing this role with performer organisations PAMRA and AURA. It meant overseas societies no longer had the excuse of blaming a confused UK situation for not making payments. Finally, the money started rolling in.

PPL also began signing reciprocal agreements with overseas societies, with more than 110 tie-ups now in place covering 95% of the global neighbouring rights market. It continues to ink deals to reach new markets including Azerbaijan and India, and in 2023 received payments for the first time from CMOs in Guatemala and Indonesia.

More international money comes into PPL from the US, Germany and France than anywhere else, while collections last year grew on an annual basis from the majority of overseas CMOs.

Performing miracles

Ever since the **EU Rental Directive** was implemented in 1996, **PPL**'s partnership with **performers** has gone from strength to strength, with their voices now an integral part of the operation. Here, we look back on the evolution of a crucial relationship...



Power to the PPL: *PPL handles overseas neighbouring rights for Central Cee, Libianca (left) and Ice Spice (below)*

In what turned out to be the last golden year for Britpop, the face of British music was radically transformed once again in 1996 when the Spice Girls unleashed 'Girl Power' onto an unsuspecting world.

Led by Wannabe, all of the quintet's first three singles topped the Official Singles Chart in a year in which Oasis' second album (What's The Story) Morning Glory? spent two months at No.1 and Three Lions resonated across the terraces for the first time as football 'came home' during Euro 96.

Nobody realised it at the time but, despite these and other releases showcasing a vibrant and prosperous period for domestic music, it was a piece of European legislation finally implemented into UK law that year which did more than anything to lift the fortunes of thousands of performers.

Despite its rather dull sounding title, the EU Rental Directive sparked something of a revolution by giving featured (contracted) performers and session performers the right for the first time to equitable remuneration when music they performed on was broadcast on radio or TV or played in public. Given this has now become a vital source of income for a significant number of featured and non-featured performers, it is easy to forget that it has only existed in the UK for less than three decades.

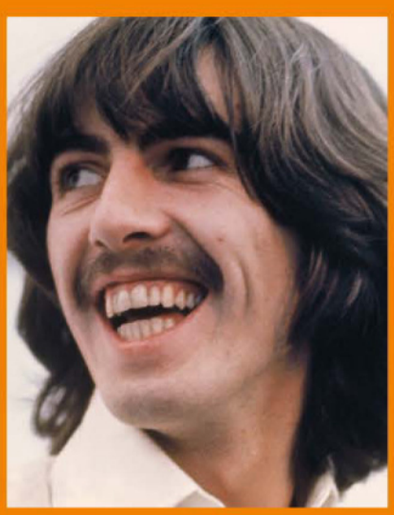
Its introduction was also the catalyst for the forging of a new relationship between PPL and performers that ultimately led to them winning a voice within the company. This began with the arrival in October 2000 of Fran Nevrkla as executive chair, later becoming chair and CEO. Not only was he a highly respected industry executive, having joined PPL from Warner Music where he served as commercial and business affairs director, he had enjoyed a hugely successful career as a leading violinist, firstly in his native Czechoslovakia, then in the UK, until a debilitating injury meant that he could not play again.

Until his arrival, PPL had little or no relationship with performers. However, motivated by his experience as a musician, he began to build trust with this community, helped by the support of a small but significant band of advocates, including then Musicians' Union general secretary and now PPL chair John Smith. This started with the setting up of the Performers' Forum.

A key turning point in PPL's burgeoning relationship with performers came in 2006 when it won approval from the Office Of Fair Trading to merge with PAMRA and AURA. This followed an earlier agreement PPL made with the two performer organisations to take sole charge of collecting and paying UK performers' revenues from the UK and overseas, turning on the tap of what is now tens of millions of pounds of international income pouring into the organisation every year. Today, PPL handles international collections for tens of thousands of performers, including, in what is now a highly competitive market for the most successful performers, the overseas neighbouring rights for a number of notable artists, musicians and producers, including Central Cee, Lewis Capaldi, Ice Spice, Libianca and Trevor Horn.

On the back of the success of the Performers' Forum, PPL further extended the voice of performers within the organisation, which included the introduction of the Performer Board and the Annual Performer Meeting. And, for the first time, performers and their representatives were allocated seats on the main PPL board. These changes were supported by the arrival in 2006 of artist manager and record executive Keith Harris, who was appointed to the new position of director of performer affairs to act as a performer representative within PPL. Fran Nevrkla also brought in former culture secretary Chris Smith to aid these efforts.

As performer representation within PPL has grown, so has its membership. In 2012, when Peter Leathem became CEO, there were around 65,000 performer members and around 30,000 performers paid in the year. A decade later, more than 150,000 performers were paid at least once by PPL during 2022. Perhaps the greatest example of the strong bonds PPL now has with performers came during the Covid-19 pandemic when a series of lockdowns forced the closure of venues and other music outlets across the UK. With performers suddenly unable to earn anything from performing, PPL stepped in, making advance payments to more than 15,000 performers and recording rights-holders in April 2020 bringing forward part of the June distribution to members in a difficult time. In addition, PPL contributed over £1.6 million to industry hardship funds throughout the pandemic.



PHOTOS: Ethan A. Russell/Apple Corps Ltd, Mark Seliger

Standing up for music rights

As our reflections have already shown, **PPL** has long played a key role in protecting musicians' interests. From the battle that led to the passing of the **EU Copyright Directive** in 2013, to the Government's **streaming inquiry**, their support has never wavered. Here, we dig into their growing influence on a host of industry debates...

PPL's lobbying and advocacy work has made it a powerful and influential voice in standing up for music rights, from helping to deliver copyright term extension for its members to supporting the industry in seeking regulation of the development and use of AI.

Sometimes this has led the organisation into potentially hazardous waters. While PPL is no stranger to the courts, regularly issuing proceedings in the High Court to prevent the unlicensed use of its sound recordings, two decades ago it became the first company in the music industry, that we are aware of, to sue the UK government.

Under its then chair and CEO Fran Nevrkla, PPL commenced legal action after the government failed to properly implement a European directive that would have enabled PPL to license a multitude of additional copyright users for playing recorded music in public. The decision to litigate paid off as the UK government changed the law, substantially extending the scope of users from whom PPL could collect income on behalf of its performer and recording rights-holder members.

More widely, the legal triumph instilled a new confidence in PPL's ability to fight even the most challenging of public affairs battles, which proved to be crucial when PPL played a central role in a lengthy and often difficult campaign by the UK music industry to secure copyright term extension for recorded music.

After many setbacks, victory was finally realised when the European Copyright Term Directive was implemented into UK law in 2013, resulting in copyright being extended for recordings from 50 to 70 years and stopping recordings by The Beatles, the Rolling Stones and many other artists from falling into the public domain.

This meant that royalties would continue to be generated for an extra two decades for recordings from 1963 onwards, when these vintage tracks were broadcast, played in public, sold or streamed.

As part of the copyright term extension reforms, session musicians became entitled to payments for physical and online sales of any recording they played on after the 50th year it was released.

In 2015, meanwhile, PPL began administering a new Session Fund for such payments, making the organisation the first European CMO to pay out this "supplementary remuneration".

Recently, PPL has also played a leading role in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented in the post-Brexit world. Whether working with UK Music or by providing information directly to the UK government, PPL has provided input on behalf of its members on trading deals, such as those negotiated with countries including Canada and India, and the UK's imminent membership of the CPTPP [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership].

Along with other parts of the UK music industry, PPL contributed to the DCMS Select Committee's inquiry into the economics of music streaming, giving evidence to the committee. PPL has since been participating in working groups that were set up to more closely examine some of the key issues, such as transparency and the use of metadata.

Through its membership of UK Music, PPL also plays an active role in wider industry lobbying efforts on artificial intelligence, which last year included seeing off a government proposal for a new and broad copyright exception for text and data mining.

PPL also annually makes financial contributions to industry organisations including AIM, BPI, IFPI, IMPALA and UK Music that campaign and advocate on behalf of the music industry, as well as helping to fund anti-piracy efforts in the UK and abroad.

Meanwhile, Peter Leathem is not only a board member of UK Music but, reflecting that PPL's lobbying role and influence stretch far beyond the UK, also has a seat on the board of performer CMO global trade body SCAPR. Whether in support of international organisations such as SCAPR and IFPI or acting independently, PPL continues to support ongoing efforts to introduce or extend rights for record companies and performers around the world.

Street Copyrighting Man: *PPL helped secure copyright extension terms for works by the Rolling Stones, The Beatles (left) and many more*

Just giving: *Maisie Peters plays a PPL supported SXSW show in 2022. The company also supports ELAM (right) and The Benedetti Foundation (below)*

Giving Something Back

Another cornerstone of **PPL**'s work is its commitment to funding initiatives within the music community. Through **PPL Giving** and many other projects, giving back to the wider music industry is at the heart of the company's mission...

In March this year, PPL celebrated the launch of a £1 million annual programme to support music organisations around the UK. This was not only a perfect way to celebrate its 90th anniversary, but also highlighted its wider impact across the industry.

While PPL is rightly lauded for delivering record-breaking income distributions to its performer and rights-holder members, its progress can also be measured by a sustainable business strategy that covers everything from supporting good causes and the performer community, to its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

PPL Giving is its biggest contribution yet to the community with an initial donation of seven figures aiding the activities of 26 organisations, covering a wide range of genres and spread across the UK. However, this new funding platform is just the tip of a very big iceberg when it comes to PPL giving back.

Since 2001, the company has had a Charity Of The Year, while its support of the music ecosystem has included annual donations to organisations such as The BRIT School. This now includes a three-year tie-up to serve as a leading partner in the south London school's Music Careers Programme. The partnership was followed by an announcement in February this year to provide funding to East London Arts & Music Academy (ELAM) over the next three years to support diversity and equity in the creative industries.

Since 2016, PPL has partnered with PRS Foundation, the UK's leading funder of new music and talent development across all genres. In 2020, it became headline sponsor of what was then rebranded the PPL Momentum Music Fund. Many hundreds of artists, including Little Simz and Sam Fender, have been helped by the fund which provides grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 for activities such as recording, touring, marketing and more.

For a number of years, PPL has been one of the industry partners supporting the British Music Embassy showcase of UK artists at SXSW in Austin, Texas. This is alongside backing a number of events and award shows around the UK, including the Music Week Awards, Focus Wales, the Gramophone Awards, Jazz FM Awards, Music Industry Trusts (MITS) Award, MPG Awards, the Northern Irish Music Prize, Scottish Album Of The Year, Sound Of Belfast, the Student Radio Awards, the Welsh Music Prize and the Wide Days conference.

PPL's focus on equity, diversity and inclusion has increased in intensity in recent years as it continues to build a team of experts reflective of the company's wide member base. The seriousness with which it takes this issue is reflected by a decision to publish annually its gender and ethnicity pay gap figures, even though with fewer than 250 full-time employees it falls under the statutory obligations to do so for gender, and there are no obligations to publish staff ethnicity data for any organisations.

This transparency happens in addition to numerous EDI initiatives, including staff training and recruitment policies. The company's efforts were recognised at Music Week's Women In Music Awards 2018 when it received the Company Award for Diversity In The Workplace.

In 2020, it launched an internal Diversity Forum of more than two dozen members to push forward ideas, deliver feedback and provide wider support to what the organisation is doing in relation to EDI.

In 2022, PPL took another significant step forward on EDI with the launch of a five-year strategy that set out clear goals for the diversity of its workforce by 2027, including a 50-50 split between men and women, and an ethnicity target of 65% of white people and 35% of non-white people, reflecting the make-up of the 2021 census data for London and South East England, where most of PPL's staff live.

Finally, last year PPL launched its first dedicated sustainability strategy. The Journey Towards Net Zero took in 17 actions the company plans to take to reduce its overall emissions and reach the ultimate goal of net zero status by 2050. In the lead-up to this, PPL commissioned a full audit of its carbon footprint.

PHOTOS: Lorne Thomson/Redferns, Getty; Ed Cooke, Jesse Crankson

Save the data: *Beggars Group act Sampha (left) and BMG star Kylie (right) are among the artists whose sound recording data goes through the PPL-run RDx platform*

Tech Control

As **PPL** looks ahead to the future, its technological expertise and trailblazing work in this area will be crucial. Here, we bring our epic celebration to a close by looking at how few in the music business crunch **data** quite like PPL...

PPL's technology and data capabilities have helped the music industry far beyond the UK, a point highlighted by Repertoire Data Exchange – or RDx – a global platform that enables the efficient flow of repertoire and rights data between rights-holders and music licensing companies.

Following what was described at the time as a "rigorous selection process", PPL was chosen in 2019 by IFPI and WIN to build and run this project. Since becoming operational a year later, RDx has signed up many of the world's leading record companies who submit their sound recording data to the service, including Beggars Group, BMG, Sony Music, Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group. By ensuring a consistent view of repertoire data and highlighting rights ownership conflicts in a timely way, the system is playing a critical role in improving the speed, accuracy and efficiency of revenue distributions around the world.

The choice of PPL to handle such a significant project reflected the organisation's leading role in Digital Data Exchange (DDEX), whose music industry members are tasked with standardising the data value chain to enable data to be managed and exchanged more effectively. DDEX also drew on the PPL's close relationships with music licensing companies around the world, as well as its expertise and track record of managing large volumes of data. In processing a typical distribution, PPL routinely generates around one billion rows of calculation data, all of which is stored in a cloud-based, analytic data platform.

In an era when data has become the music industry's most valuable currency, entrusting PPL with building and running RDx was also a testament to how far its technological knowledge and expertise had progressed over the previous two decades. This reputation had been hard-won.

When Fran Nevrkla arrived at the start of the new millennium, he discovered a company still firmly stuck in the 20th century with a distinct lack of IT systems. This prompted the building and roll-out of the CatCo database, which enabled member companies to register for PPL and obtain mechanical licences from MCPS electronically. Developed from the RIAA sound recording database, CatCo at its launch in 2003 held details of 6.4 million recordings, including their product releases, label ownership, artists and performers, and ISRC numbers.

Two decades on, CatCo has long since been replaced by even more ambitious state-of-the art, often cloud-based, systems designed to support all of PPL's operational and analytic requirements. This includes its Repertoire Database, one of the most sophisticated and comprehensive of its kind, holding performer and recording rights-holder information on more than 25 million recordings. On average, details of 45,000 new recordings are added to it every single week. As an overall measure of the importance that PPL places on systems and data, the technology team now makes up around 25% of the overall company headcount.

Another example of its internal systems is the dedicated online member portal MyPPL, which allows members to view payments, access statements, upload repertoire and search for recordings on which they have performed.

Two years ago, PPL unveiled Usage Hub, a system to standardise and automate the receipt and pre-processing of the large volumes of music usage data that is received from commercial radio stations, public performance licensees and CMOs. Meanwhile, in the last 12 months, PPL has launched an analytic data platform that brings together finance, member, repertoire, usage and distribution data into a single repository allowing for complex analysis and insight.

PPL's global influence also includes the leading role it has played in the design, development and adoption of the Virtual Recordings Database (VRDB), a technology and business transformation project run by the worldwide CMO organisation SCAPR. VRDB has established a centralised, authoritative database of repertoire and performer line-ups that sees the leading CMOs collaborating on the maintenance of this data. This improved way of managing recording and performer data has played a vital role in increasing the accuracy and speed of payments to performers across the globe.

Such is the quality and reputation of its technology and infrastructure that other CMOs around the world turn to PPL to help to calculate and distribute their royalties.

This takes place through PPL's business services operation. Six CMOs in Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Portugal utilise this back office support service, meaning they do not have to invest in complex and costly technology themselves to manage their data and payments. As well as removing cost from the wider industry, this also drives a greater level of accuracy and consistency across royalty payments to rights-holders and performers.

The sharing of systems, data and costs is central to PPL's philosophy and PPL has not been shy in securing services from other companies where appropriate. The company works with a variety of external partners and service providers, including music credit and information services provider Sound Credit.

Of course, PPL also works with PRS For Music. The two companies use Music Recognition Technology (MRT) to identify music played by DJs in clubs and pubs, while last year they teamed up with Audoo to install audio meters in some premises licensed by the PPL PRS public performance JV.

HITMAKERS

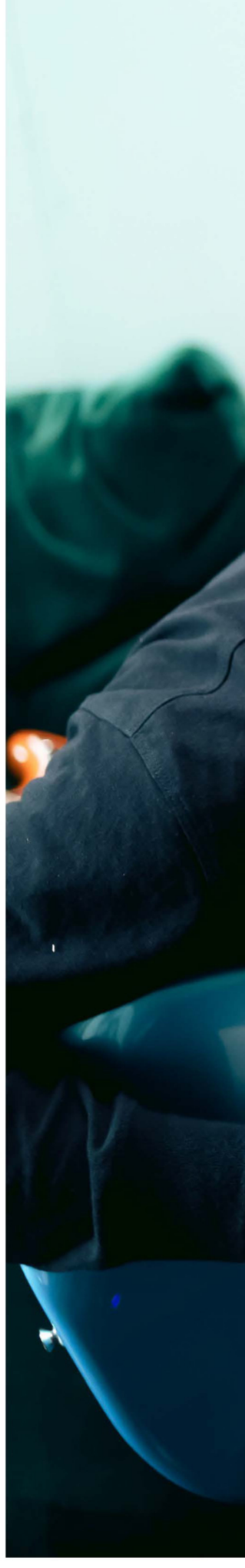
The world's greatest songs. By the people who made them.

ARTEMAS

I LIKE THE WAY YOU KISS ME

After taking off on TikTok in March this year, **Artemas'** **I Like The Way You Kiss Me** has since racked up over 500 million streams on Spotify and hit No.3 in the UK. Here, producer and instrumentalist **Toby Daintree** takes us behind the scenes on how the alt-pop smash was created, and talks nursery rhymes, why you should never plan to go viral and last minute recordings while waiting for a taxi...

INTERVIEW: MIRANDA BARDSLEY



The week that we made I Like The Way You Kiss Me was the best writing experience I've ever had, it was magical.

I met Artemas two-and-a-half years ago when I joined his band and we became friends. I was studying jazz guitar at Guildhall [School Of Music & Drama] at the time and Artemas was in this sort of limbo space where he'd signed his publishing deal, done his first mixtape and some of his tracks had done well. We started making this bedroom pop, Dominic Fike-inspired kind of stuff before we moved into darker R&B.

We were going to start a band, but one of Artemas' songs popped off from his own project, so we decided to work on that together, writing everyday. I was a barista at the time, so I'd work from around 6:30am to 12:30pm then go to the studio, and we'd do that five or six times a week, it was intense! But also really exciting, we knew there was a vibe between us and it was so easy and fun. After a while, a few songs went off on TikTok and did quite well, like If U Think I'm Pretty [2023], which inspired the Pretty mixtape.

I Like The Way You Kiss Me came about when we were in LA working with Kevin White and Jesse Finkelstein, which was crazy. Jesse is amazing, he's so nice and makes Artemas feel so at ease, and Kev is so efficient that it makes the whole session so easy.

During the week, we did about two songs a day, and I Like The Way You Kiss Me happened on the third. We had this beat which was a totally different vibe to start with – it was in half time – but we started listening to Eyedress and tracks like Mareaux's The Perfect Girl, and we went for the darkwake kind of sound.

With me and Artemas, it's commonly me on a guitar or synth doing chords or a riff, and him mumbling a melody. That's how it was with this, I remember playing around with chords, we got the hook in place, did those double-time drums and as soon as we made the percussive, high-end bass, the vibe of the track was there.

I often think nursery rhymes have the best melodies, they're simple and easy to remember – which is like I Like The Way You Kiss Me, it doesn't have any extraneous elements you don't need.

When it came to recording it, it was also so quick. Artemas never wants to put a vocal down more than once – the quality of the vocal you get is what you've got to deal with! I'm really drawn to that kind of philosophy of working quickly. If you overthink the first take, you'll overthink the whole thing and if you're not quick about something, it probably won't happen.

We also recorded the melody two semitones down because we pitched up his vocals on the track. Initially we did that on the app CapCut to tease it on TikTok, but when people started hearing it in that pitch and tempo, we didn't want to mess with what they were liking, so we pitched up the actual project in Ableton.

It was the track's intro that went off. It's crazy, before the hook, Artemas does this little mumble, which we did right at the end of the day. We were so tired and just waiting for our Uber from Kev's studio when I said to Artemas, 'You should put a little mumble in the intro.' The mic was brought over to him on the sofa and he did it, it was the least thought out thing and it's so funny that it blew up! I think that kind of nonchalance is so powerful in the track.

We finished it all in about three days. There was a different bridge we changed and we spent ages on the track's instrumental bit, but the important things stayed the same and we only made little changes afterwards. Mixing is more of an emotional thing anyway, all the decisions at that point weren't that technical.

It was in another session that we realised I Like The Way You Kiss Me was blowing up. It's so funny because, at first, I wasn't even that into the song. I thought it was good, but I didn't think it was *cool*, even though not everything has to be cool... [*Laughs*].

As I heard it more I started to think it was and I remember driving around LA one night thinking it was a vibe. I was probably just being cynical, because now I'm like, 'Damn, this is good!' I think what people also like about Artemas is that he's earnest in everything he does, he's open to different things and he takes risks.

I don't think we would have done anywhere near as well as we did without having a platform like TikTok, but we never think about it while writing. If you do, you end up creating pastiches of what you think might work. Every time we've had something that's done well, we've had a period of time where we've been writing pastiches of the same kind of track and they've not been that good. When you get bored of trying to do that, that's when you end up making something good – and it's that kind of effortlessness in I Like The Way You Kiss Me which works.

This song has made me aware of not overthinking. It was the perfect storm of us trusting ourselves and going with our guts, and it's amazing what happened. But for me? I'm the same musician as I was, and making music is still, genuinely, the only thing I like doing. So nothing has *really* changed...

"We never think about TikTok while writing – if you do, you end up creating pastiches of what you think might work"
Toby Daintree

A piece of Artemas: *Toby Daintree and [inset] Artemas in the I Like The Way You Kiss Me music video*

Writer's Notes

PUBLISHERS: Warner Chappell, Sony Music Publishing, Kobalt Music Publishing, Arcade Artist Publishing, Lyric Global Copyright Services
WRITERS: Artemas Diamandis, Toby Daintree, Kevin White, Jesse Finkelstein
PRODUCERS: Artemas Diamandis, Toby Daintree, Kevin White
RELEASE DATE: 19.03.24
LABEL: Parlophone
TOTAL SALES (OCC): 362,602

Publisher's Corner

Leading executives salute their star songwriters...

George Baker, A&R manager, WCM UK:
"Toby has had an incredible few months – his songs I Like The Way You Kiss Me and If U Think I'm Pretty have been global successes. He's creating some amazing music with Artemas and I'm sure there will be more great songs to come. We're delighted to have recently partnered with Toby and are looking forward to helping him develop even further while connecting him with the best artists and writers internationally. This is just the start for him and I can't wait to see what he creates next."

PHOTO: Sophie Scott

BELLA FIGURA MUSIC WELCOMES RAK PUBLISHING

BELLA FIGURA MUSIC

SCAN ME

CENTRE STAGE

Music Venue Trust CEO Mark Davyd's monthly deep dive into live music's biggest issues...

THIS MONTH:

THE OWN-LY WAY IS UP

A couple of years ago, Music Venue Trust launched the Own Our Venues project. This community share ownership initiative is one of our most radical ideas, and it has the deepest impact and the most sustainable outcomes for the future of grassroots music venues.

In our work, we always try to follow the process of collecting data, understanding the challenge, working to design the best solution, then delivering it in partnership with other organisations. When we began the Own Our Venues project in June 2022, we accompanied it with the data that 93% of the UK's grassroots live sector operated in premises owned by a private landlord under a tenancy agreement.

That crucial piece of information – which, like much of our work, was learned during our annual survey – revealed the most significant obstacle to a sustainable grassroots touring circuit: these venues have sprung up organically across many years and the majority do not have anything that might be described as a maintainable occupancy arrangement for the premises they inhabit. In 2022, only 7% owned their building or had a long-term leasehold agreement sufficient to plan beyond their immediate future.

This is an almost unique fact about the UK's grassroots music venues (GMVs). Once we had the data, we started looking around the world to see if this was a shared problem and quickly learned that it was not. We found that US and Australian venue ownership splits about 50/50 between tenancies and operators, whilst in much of Europe, the model was nearly an even split between tenancies, occupiers and public ownership. Our UK model of ownership, where the future of most venues is permanently uncertain due to the owner of the building having no involvement in the running of the venue within it, was an outlier.

The result of such uncertainty isn't just that the venue operator might face crippling rent reviews or simply the end of a tenancy. Our work to understand this model revealed many other challenges that spring from it.

As just one example, operators and teams in the sector are hugely enthusiastic to start on the path towards carbon neutrality. A carbon-neutral venue must tackle energy generation and consumption, perhaps by installing solar panels or insulation. These are structural investments, increasing the value and sustainability of a building that the operator does not own. Their enthusiasm for such investments is not matched by the freehold owners of the building, with the result that even if a venue elected to use its own resources to invest in tackling its carbon impact, the long-term beneficiary of it is the landlord. In one case where the operator was determined to push ahead with tackling this issue, they received a notice from the landlord that these structural improvements had increased the value of the building, which would trigger a rent review.

This isn't just an issue for an operator business considering how to use its finances, it's also an issue when making applications for public investment through grants. A key question in any application is what would happen to capital investment if the business were to close, and operator tenants cannot reasonably claim that insulation or solar panels would be ripped from a premises and installed elsewhere. Short-term tenancy agreements are a contributing reason why public funding of GMVs remains.

In October 2023, the Own Our Venues project bought its first venue, The Snug in Atherton, creating a new charitable community benefit society called Music Venue Properties.

Buying premises housing GMVs is a lengthy business, requiring multiple levels of testing economic viability, surveys and conveyancing. However, by the time you read this, the new society will have bought three more properties: The Ferret in Preston and two for which offers have been accepted. It is working on three more, and there is much more work to be done.

Own Our Venues is the type of project that focuses on short-term, large-scale investments, which make a radical change to the long-term financial stability of the grassroots music sector. It's these projects that will make the biggest difference; not just by changing the ownership model but by giving operators the stability they need to have a view of their future, to be able to extend and diversify their programme, and work to reduce their costs and increase income.

Sony, Warner and Amazon Music were early investors into the Own Our Venues programme, and those partnerships helped us to attract over 1,250 investors. Own Our Venues gives ownership of music in our towns and cities back to the communities that love their local spaces. It's a long-lasting positive change that will be delivered when partners in the industry get involved.

"Own Our Venues focuses on short-term investments, which make a radical change to the long-term stability of the grassroots sector"

MARK DAVYD MUSIC VENUE TRUST

STATE OF THE (INDIE) NATION:

A monthly update on the ongoing closure crisis facing the UK's grassroots music venues, which MVT tackles through its Emergency Response Service of experts; legal, licensing, planning, development, financial, property and noise gurus...

New Emergency response service cases in 2024: 107
Ongoing cases: 31
Grassroots Music Venue closures in the last 12 months: 43
Grassroots Music Venue openings in the last 12 months: 6

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Music Week

MONTHLY CHARTS

May the force be with her: Sabrina Carpenter's first UK No.1 Espresso topped the singles chart throughout May

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76/78 – Singles/Albums

77/79 – Analysis

80/81 – Market Shares

82 – Streaming/Compilations

83 – Vinyl

84/85 – Genre Top 20s

86/87 – UK Airplay/EU Airplay

88 – Spotify

89 – Vevo

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Official Singles Chart

SINGLES CHART TOP 75

MAY CHART WEEKS 18-21

BRIT CERTIFIED PLATINUM, GOLD & SILVER AWARDS

★ Platinum (600,000)
● Gold (400,000)
● Silver (200,000)

TM	LM	MTH	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL CATALOGUE NUMBER (DISTRIBUTOR) (PRODUCER) PUBLISHER (WRITER)
1	10	2	**Sabrina Carpenter** Espresso Island USUM72403305 (UDS) ● (J.Bunetta)Universal/MCA/Peermusic/WarnerChapp. (S.Carpenter/S.Jones/J.Bunetta/A.Allen)
2	1	2	**Hozier** Too Sweet Island IEACJ2300335 (UDS) ● (Bēkon/PeteG/Hozier/Chakra/Sergiu)SonyATV/Kobalt/Universal/MCA/CC (Hozier/Tannenbaum/Krieger/Johnson...)
3	New		**Shaboozey** A Bar Song (Tipsy) American Dogwood/Empire USUYG1543926 (Empire) (Nevin/S.Cook)WarnerChappell/Kobalt/CC (C.Chibueze/S.Cook/M.Williams/N.Sastry)
4	14	2	**Taylor Swift Ft Post Malone** Fortnight EMI USUG12401028 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff/A.Post)
5	2	4	**Benson Boone** Beautiful Things Warner USWB12307017 (Arvato) ★ (E.Blair)Warner Chappell/Sony ATV/Kobalt (B.Boone/E.Blair/J.LaFrantz Larsen)
6	New		**Tommy Richman** Million Dollar Baby ISO Supremacy/Pulse QM24S2402528 (Stem Disintermedia) (M.Vossberg/J.Roy/Mannyvelli/Sparkheem/Kavi)CC (T.Richman)
7	6	2	**Artemas** I Like The Way You Kiss Me Parlophone QZJ842400388 (Arvato) (Artemas/K.White/T.Daintree)Sony/LyricGlobal/Arcade/Kobalt/CC (A.Diamandis/J.Finkelstein/K.White/T.Daintree)
8	5	6	**Teddy Swims** Lose Control Atlantic USWB12302315 (Arvato) ★ (Ammo/J.Bunetta)Warner/Universal/Peermusic/SonyATV/Kobalt (TeddySwims/Ammo/Bunetta/Infamous/MikkyEkko)
9	3	8	**Noah Kahan** Stick Season Republic USUM72212470 (UDS) ★2 (G.Simon/N.Kahan)Sony ATV (N.Kahan)
10	9	3	**Dasha** Austin Warner QZTB92360479 (Arvato) (T.Heidelman)Sentric/SonyATV/STmusic/CC (A.Wendler/D.Novotny/C.Arnspiger/T.Heidelman)
11	New		**Post Malone Ft Morgan Wallen** I Had Some Help Republic USUM72404990 (UDS) (Bell/Handsome/Hoskins)Universal/Mca/WarnerChappell/SonyATV (Post/Wallen/Gorley/Walters/Smith/Hoskins/Bell/Vojtesak)
12	38	2	**Taylor Swift** I Can Do It With A Broken Heart EMI USUG12401053 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
13	New		**Kendrick Lamar** Not Like Us Interscope USUG12400910 (UDS) (Mustard)Universal/Mca (K.Duckworth)
14	16	2	**Mark Ambor** Belong Together Hundred Days QM24S2400638 (Virgin/UDS) (M.Ambor/N.Zancanella)CC (M.Damboragian)
15	4	4	**Beyoncé** Texas Hold 'Em Columbia/Parkwood Ent. USSM12401302 (UDS) ★ (Beyoncé/R.Saadiq/various)SonyATV/Arts And Crafts/Universal/Kobalt .. (Beyoncé/Saadiq/Boland/Bülow/Bates/Ferraro)
16	36	2	**Taylor Swift** Down Bad EMI USUG12401031 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
17	7	3	**Ariana Grande** We Can't Be Friends (Wait For Your Love) Republic USUM72317276 (UDS) (A.Grande/Max Martin/I.Salmanzadeh)Universal/MCA/Kobalt/MXM/Warner Chappell (A.Grande/Max Martin/I.Salmanzadeh)
18	11	4	**Michael Marcagi** Scared To Start Warner USWB12400001 (Arvato) (D.Baron)CC (A.Yorio /M.Marcagi)
19	12	10	**Cassö, Raye & D Block Europe** Prada Ministry Of Sound GBCEN2300147 (UDS) ★ (Cassö)Bucks/SonyATV/Kobalt/Warner Chappell (A.Williams/J.Simmons/O.Ebele/U.Ebele/R.Keen/R.Banton)
20	8	4	**Djo** End Of Beginning AWAL/Djo GBKPL2205058 (AWAL/The Orchard) ● (J.Keery/A.Thein)Sentric (J.Keery)
21	55	2	**Taylor Swift** Who's Afraid Of Little Old Me? EMI USUG12401037 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift)
22	New		**Chappell Roan** Good Luck, Babe! Island USUG12401967 (UDS) (D.Nigro)Sony ATV/Warner Chappell (K.Amstutz/D.Nigro/J.Tranter)
23	49	2	**Taylor Swift** But Daddy I Love Him EMI USUG12401050 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/A.Dessner/T.Swift)Universal/Mca/Sony ATV (T.Swift/A.Dessner)
24	59	2	**Dua Lipa** Illusion Warner GBAHT2400114 (Arvato) (D.L Harle/K.Parker)WarnerChapp./SonyATV/Universal/MCA (D.Lipa/C.Ailin/D.L Harle/K.Parker/T.Jesso Jr)
25	22	3	**The Blessed Madonna Ft Clementine Douglas** Happier FFRR GBAHT2301515 (Arvato) (C.Douglas/O.Higginbottom/H.Counsell/M.Stamper)BMG/Peermusic/Kobalt/WarnerChapp. (M.Stamper/C.Douglas...)
26	34	2	**Benson Boone** Slow It Down Warner USWB12400913 (Arvato) (J.Evigan/C.McDonough/R.McDonough)Warner Chappell/BMG/Kobalt (B.Boone/J.Evigan/C.& R.McDonough...)
27	New		**Kendrick Lamar** Euphoria Interscope USUG12402839 (UDS) (Sounwave/Cardo/Kyro/J.Juliano/Yung Exclusive..)Universal/Mca (K.Duckworth)
28	33	2	**Taylor Swift** The Tortured Poets Department EMI USUG12401048 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
29	39	2	**Taylor Swift** So Long, London EMI USUG12401032 (UDS) (T.Swift/A.Dessner)Universal/Mca/Sony ATV (T.Swift/A.Dessner)
30	54	2	**Taylor Swift Ft Florence + The Machine** Florida!!! EMI USUG12401051 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/F.Welch)
31	15	15	**Taylor Swift** Cruel Summer EMI USUG11901472 (UDS) ★2 (A.Swift/J.Antonoff)Universal/Sony ATV/Peermusic (T.Swift/J.Antonoff/A.Clark)
32	13	9	**Tate McRae** Greedy Ministry Of Sound USRV82300987 (UDS) ★ (Tedder/Harris/Boutin)WarnerChapp./SonyATV/Kobalt/Concord/Superreal/Artist (T.McRae/R.Tedder/J.Harris/A.Allen)
33	70	2	**David Guetta & OneRepublic** I Don't Wanna... Interscope/Parlophone UKWLG2400013 (Arvato) (Guetta/Kutzle/T.I Jakke/Spry/Reznikov/Jackback/EMI/SonyATV/WarnerChappell/CC (Guetta/Balan/Tedder/Pollack...)
34	46	2	**Taylor Swift** My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys EMI USUG12401030 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift)
35	75	2	**Lay Bankz** Tell Ur Girlfriend Artist Partner Group QZZ4J2400019 (AudioSalad) (J.Goldstein)Sony ATV/CC (L.Watkins/J.Goldstein/A.Boggs)
36	18	4	**Ella Henderson & Rudimental** Alibi Atlantic GBAHS2301557 (Arvato) (Punctual/Rudimental)Sony/Reservoir/Universal/BMG/Budde/EMI/Jobete.. (Ivey Jr/Rasheed/Henderson/Morgan/Sanders...)
37	65	2	**Taylor Swift** Guilty As Sin? EMI USUG12401036 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
38	23	4	**NewEra** Birds In The Sky Warner GBAHT2301496 (Arvato) (K.Durkan/B.Williams)CC (K.Durkan/B.Williams/D.Mowlds)
39	17	3	**Future, Metro Boomin & Kendrick Lamar** Like That Epic/Freebandz/Republic USSM12402041 (UDS) (Metro Boomin)Universal/MCA/EMI/Peermusic (Wilburn/Wayne/Duckworth/Oliver/Cooley/Hood)
40	21	15	**Natasha Bedingfield** Unwritten Phonogenic GBARL0400707 (UDS) ★2 (W.Rodrigues/D.Brisebois)EMI/Kobalt (N.Bedingfield/D.Brisebois/W.Rodrigues)
41	New		**Badger & Natasha Bedingfield** These Words Cheeky GBARL2400375 (UDS) (Badger)EMI/Kobalt (N.Bedingfield/S.Kipner/A.Frampton/W.Wilkins)
42	New		**Taylor Swift** The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived EMI USUG12401054 (UDS) (A.Dessner/T.Swift)Universal/Mca/Sony ATV (T.Swift/A.Dessner)
43	New		**Myles Smith** Stargazing RCA GB1102400616 (UDS) (P.Fenn)Kobalt/CC (J.Fink/M.Smith/P.Fenn)
44	41	209	**The Killers** Mr Brightside Vertigo GBFFP0300052 (UDS) ★9 (Saltzman/The Killers)Universal. (Flowers/Keuning)
45	45	10	**Bakar** Hell N Back Black Butter GB1101901014 (UDS) ★ (JakeTheSnake/Beach Noise)Kobalt/SonyATV/CC (A.Shariff-Farr/M.Schaeffer/John Kosich/Jake Kosich/A.Boyd...)
46	47	3	**Rudimental & Skepsis Ft...** Green & Gold Columbia GBARL2400114 (UDS) (Rudimental/Skepsis/BillenTed/SlimTypical)Kobalt/Sony/Universal/BMG (Plank/Bellis/DRIIA/Conway/Housley/Dryden...)
47	New		**Billie Eilish** Lunch Interscope USUM72401991 (UDS) (Finneas)Kobalt/Universal/Mca (F.O'Connell/B.Eilish)
48	26	7	**Jungle** Back On 74 Caiola QM4TX2336316 (The Orchard) (J.Lloyd)Kobalt (L.Kitto/T.Mcfarland/J.Lloyd-Watson)
49	19	4	**Dua Lipa** Training Season Warner GBAHT2301078 (Arvato) (K.Parker)Universal/Mca/SonyATV/EMI/WarnerChapp./Hyetown/CC (Ailin/Harle/Lipa/Parker/Sorbara/Gale/Frank...)
50	48	3	**SZA** Saturn RCA/Top Dawg USRC12400218 (UDS) (Lang/Bisel/Solomonophonic/Monsune)Universal/Mca/WarnerChap./SonyATV/Sony (S.Rowe/C.Lang/R.Bisel/J.Solomon...)
51	53	75	**Fleetwood Mac** Everywhere Warner USWB19900202 (Arvato) ★5 (L.Buckingham/R.Dashut)Universal (C.McVie)
52	43	10	**Sonny Fodera & MK Ft Clemetine Douglas** Asking Solotoko US39N2307761 (ADA Arvato) ★ (MK/S.Fodera)Peermusic/Sony ATV/BMG (C.Douglas/M.Kinchen/S.Fodera)
53	27	3	**Bryson Tiller** Whatever She Wants Relentless USRC12400300 (UDS) (TylianMTB)Sony ATV/CC (B.Tiller/T.Majette/TJ Francois)
54	28	4	**Kygo & Ava Max** Whatever Columbia/Kygo USRC12302637 (UDS) (Kygo/Petey)Universal/SonyATV/WarnerChapp./Kobalt/CC (Koci/Tighe/Rawitz/Kygo/Petey/Rollo/Shakira/Estefan/Mitchell)
55	New		**Taylor Swift** Loml EMI USUG12401039 (UDS) (A.Dessner/T.Swift)Universal/Mca/Sony ATV (T.Swift/A.Dessner)
56	51	11	**Olivia Rodrigo** Vampire Geffen USUG12305004 (UDS) ★ (D.Nigro)Sony ATV (O.Rodrigo/D.Nigro)
57	New		**Perrie** Forget About UsColumbia GBARL2400298 (UDS) (S.Solomon/A.Goldstein)Sony ATV/Kobalt (P.Edwards/E.Sheeran/S.Solomon/D.Hall Hodges)
58	31	9	**Tyla** Water Since '93/RCA USSM12305386 (UDS) ★ (S.Soso)Concord/Lyric/Kobalt/Sony/WarnerChapp./CC (Seethal/Awuku/Stewart/Irosogie/Keay/Lewis/LoMastro/Zucca/Goufar)
59	29	7	**Jack Harlow** Lovin On Me Atlantic USAT22311373 (Arvato) ★ (OZ/Nik D/S.Momberger)SonyATV/Universal/Mca/WarnerChapp./Kobalt/CC (Harlow/Yildırım/Frascona/Momberger/Pabón...)
60	44	4	**Good Neighbours** Home Some Action GBUM72400322 (UDS) (O.Fox/S.Verrill)Sony ATV/Warner Chappell (O.Fox/S.Verrill)
61	25	6	**Sophie Ellis-Bextor** Murder On The Dancefloor Polydor GBAKW0100329 (UDS) ★2 (M.Rowe/G.Alexander)BMG/Concord (G.Alexander/S.Ellis-Bextor)
62	50	9	**Zach Bryan Ft Kacey Musgraves** I Remember.... Interscope/Warner USWB12304903 (Arvato) ● (Z.Bryan)Warner Chappell (Z.Bryan/K.Musgraves)
63	67	58	**Fleetwood Mac** Dreams Rhino/Warner USWB10400046 (Arvato) ★4 (Fleetwood Mac/K.Caillat/R.Dashut)Kobalt (S.Nicks)
64	Re-Entry		**Mark Ronson Ft Amy Winehouse** Valerie Columbia GBARL0701008 (UDS) ★3 (M.Ronson)Warner Chappell (D.McCabe/R.Pritchard/B.Chowdhury/S.Payne/A.Harding)
65	Re-Entry		**Harry Styles** As It Was Columbia USSM12200612 (UDS) ★4 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Universal/Pulse/One Year Yesterday (H.Styles/T.Hull/T.Johnson)
66	New		**Drake** Push Ups OVO/Republic USUG12402283 (UDS) (Boi-1da/Fierce/Coleman/Cadastre)Universal/Mca/SonyATV (A.Graham/M.Samuels/N.Cadastre)
67	Re-Entry		**Sabrina Carpenter** Feather Polydor USUM72301876 (UDS) (J.Ryan)WarnerChappell/Peermusic/Universal/Mca (A.Allen/J.Ryan/S.Carpenter)
68	New		**Taylor Swift** The Alchemy EMI USUG12401042 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
69	60	17	**Miley Cyrus** Flowers Columbia USSM22202811 (UDS) ★3 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Warner Chappell/Pulse/Concord (M.Pollack/M.Cyrus/G.Hein)
70	32	7	**Dua Lipa** Houdini Warner GBAHT2301246 (Arvato) ● (DL Harle/K.Parker)Universal/Mca/Sony/ATV (C.Ailin/Dua Lipa/K.Parker/T.Jesso Jr./DL Harle)
71	New		**Taylor Swift** So High School EMI USUG12402544 (UDS) (A.Dessner/T.Swift)Universal/Mca/Sony ATV (T.Swift/A.Dessner)
72	New		**Taylor Swift** Fresh Out The Slammer EMI USUG12401034 (UDS) (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Mca (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
73	New		**Billie Eilish** Chihiro Interscope USUM72401988 (UDS) (Finneas)Kobalt/Universal/Mca (F.O'Connell/B.Eilish)
74	71	123	**Vance Joy** Riptide Atlantic AULI01385760 (Arvato) ★6 (Keogh/White/Castle)We Are unified PTY (Keogh)
75	New		**Drake** Family Matters OVO/Republic USUG12402985 (UDS) (Boi-1da/TayKeith/Ronson/Fierce/Mitchell)Universal/Mca (A.Graham)

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ANALYSIS

Music Week digs into the month's top chart stories...

No filter: *Sabrina Carpenter*

POT LUCK

01

SABRINA CARPENTER

Espresso (Polydor)

SALES: 304,680

Sabrina Carpenter set the singles chart alight in May. Espresso hit No.1 in the first chart week, where it would stay for the duration of the month. Her first UK Top 10 hit, Espresso is the eighth track by Carpenter to clock up more than 100,000 sales in the UK and ended the month as her biggest song with a tally of 470,007. Still just 25, Carpenter has been releasing music for a decade already and has five full-length albums to her name. Carpenter, who recently supported Taylor Swift on her Eras live extravaganza, took pole position by just 484 sales in her first week at No.1, the smallest margin in over a year. Espresso topped our monthly Top 75 with more than 300,000 sales.

RAISE THE BAR

SHABOOZEY

A Bar Song (Tipsy) (American Dogwood/Empire)

SALES: 211,090

03

Beyoncé collaborator Shaboozey's country/rap crossover interpolates J-Kwon's 2004 hit Tipsy and continued to fly in May, adding 211,090 sales. Real name Collins Obinna Chibueze, the Virginia songwriter still has a way to go to eclipse the 436,782 sales amassed by J-Kwon's hit, but in reaching a peak of No.3, he has already bettered its highest chart position by one.

Bar crawl: *Shaboozey*

WELL VERSED

TAYLOR SWIFT (FEAT. POST MALONE)

04

Fortnight (EMI)

SALES: 203,103

Taylor Swift mania continued last month, to the extent that the superstar has no fewer than 16 entries in our Top 75 rundown. The highest, with 203,103 sales for May, is Post Malone collaboration Fortnight, with I Can Do It With A Broken Heart (126,381 sales) and Down Bad (99,043) also featuring in the Top 20.

NEWS IN BEEF

KENDRICK LAMAR

Not Like Us (Polydor)

SALES: 122,044

13

Kendrick Lamar's beef with Drake took over social media as fans dissected every bar, but as last month wore on, the tracks came to take over the charts, too. Lamar wins out with Not Like Us' 122,044 sales equating to a No.13 finish, with Euphoria and Future/Metro Boomin collab Like That also in our list, along with Drake's Push Ups and Family Matters.

BREAK THE BANKZ

LAY BANKZ

35

Tell Ur Girlfriend (Artist Partner Group)

SALES: 71,666

Tell Ur Girlfriend saw a 70.3% sales surge in May, moving 71,666 units to nestle at No.35 in our chart. The track peaked at No.15 in the weekly chart for the viral 19-year-old rapper from Philadelphia, who has almost four million followers and 132 million likes on TikTok.

Tell tales: *Lay Bankz*

IN THE MIX

PERRIE

57

Forget About Us (Columbia)

SALES: 52,620

Little Mix star Perrie Edwards is building up to the release of her debut solo album upon solid foundations. Her impressive first single Forget About Us, an Ed Sheeran co-write, added 52,620 sales in May and reached the Top 10 in the weekly chart. A 27.5% sales increase saw it push its overall tally to just under 100,000 sales. Big things are surely coming.

PHOTO: Shakur Richardson

Official Albums Chart

ALBUMS CHART TOP 75

MAY CHART WEEKS 18-21

BRIT CERTIFIED PLATINUM, GOLD & SILVER AWARDS

★ Platinum (300,000)
● Gold (100,000)
● Silver (60,000)

TM	LM	MTHS	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL CATALOGUE NUMBER (DISTRIBUTOR) (PRODUCER)
1	1	2	**Taylor Swift** The Tortured Poets Department EMI 6508134 (UDS) ★ (J.Antonoff/A.Dessner/T.Swift)
2	New		**Billie Eilish** Hit Me Hard And Soft Interscope 6522367 (UDS) ● (Finneas)
3	New		**Dua Lipa** Radical Optimism Warner 5054197943478 (Arvato) ● (D.L.Harle/I.Kirkpatrick/K.Parker/A.Wyatt)
4	3	40	**The Weeknd** The Highlights Republic/XO 3573443 (UDS) ★3 (The Weeknd/Max Martin/Holter/Payami/McKinney/Cirkut/Tesfaye/Dukes/Metro Boomin/Illangelo/Dre Moon/Billions DiehL..)
5	4	9	**Olivia Rodrigo** Guts Geffen 5816372 (UDS) ★ (D.Nigro/Alexander 23/I.Kirkpatrick/O.Rodrigo/R.Linvill)
6	New		**Pet Shop Boys** Nonetheless Parlophone 5054197903632 (Arvato) (J.Ford)
7	8	67	**Fleetwood Mac** 50 Years – Don't Stop Rhino 0603497855612 (Arvato) ★4 (Fleetwood Mac/R.Dashut/K.Caillat)
8	5	12	**Noah Kahan** Stick Season Republic 4851912 (UDS) ● (G.Simon/K.Snyder/N.Kahan)
9	9	185	**ABBA** Gold – Greatest Hits Polydor 2752259 (UDS) ★21 (Andersson/Ulvaeus)
10	17	37	**Olivia Rodrigo** Sour Geffen 3807744 (UDS) ★3 (Dan Nigro/Alexander23/Jam City/A.Rodrigo)
11	New		**Kings Of Leon** Can We Please Have Fun Polydor 6523248 (UDS) (Kid Harpoon)
12	11	79	**Elton John** Diamonds Mercury/UMR 6700657 (UDS) ★4 (Dudgeon/John/Franks/Thomas/Michael/Leonard/Bell/T-Bone Burnett/Bellotte/Bacharach/C.Bayer Sager/Narada/Penny...
13	2	2	**Beyoncé** Cowboy Carter Columbia/Parkwood Ent. 19658899652 (UDS) ● (070 Shake/BAH/Beyoncé/Pollack/Cyrus/Ferraro/No I.D/NOVA WAV/McCartney/Pharrell/Saadiq/Solymar/Everett/Mårtensson...i)
14	12	138	**Eminem** Curtain Call: The Hits Interscope 9887893 (UDS) ★10 (Eminem/Dr Dre/Resto/The 45 King & Louie/DJ Head/Elizondo/Bass/The Recording Academy/Mel-Man)
15	16	33	**Michael Jackson** The Essential Epic/Legacy 88697832712 (UDS) ★5 (Jones/Jackson/Various)
16	New		**Frank Turner** Undefeated Xtra Mile XMR188CD (The Orchard/Proper) (F.Turner)
17	24	18	**SZA** SOS RCA 0196589564931 (UDS) ★ (A.Atlantica/Buccellati/Babyface/Beat Butcha/benny blanco/B.Slatkin/BLK Beats/C.Lang/D.McKinnon/DJ Dahi/E.Rise...)
18	27	13	**Post Malone** The Diamond Collection Republic 0602455704467 (UDS) ● (Post Malone/Carter Lang/Ging/Illangelo/L.Bell/Metro Boomin/Tank God/Watt)
19	6	3	**Ariana Grande** Eternal Sunshine Republic 6508149 (UDS) ● (A.Grande/MaxMartin/Ilya/S.Yasuda/N.Lee/A.Paris/W.Loftis/DaviDior/O.Görres/L.Kloser)
20	22	166	**Bob Marley & The Wailers** Legend Tuff Gong 5489042 (UDS) ★14 (Bob Marley & The Wailers/C.Blackwell/E.Brown/J.Nuber/Scratch Perry)
21	29	125	**Oasis** Time Flies – 1994-2009 Big Brother RKIDCD66 (The Orchard/Proper) ★6 (Oasis/Coyle/Morris/Stent/Sardy/Gallagher)
22	25	123	**Queen** Greatest Hits EMI 2761039 (UDS) ★24 (Baker/Queen/Mack)
23	23	127	**Arctic Monkeys** AM Domino WIGCD317 (Integral UDS) ★6 (Ford/Orton)
24	New		**Zayn** Room Under The Stairs Republic 6527557 (UDS) (Zayn/C.Lang/D.Cobb/J.Ghaleb/German/G.Stone/R.McDonald/K.Lomax)
25	26	2	**Linkin Park** Papercuts: Singles Collection 2000–2023 Warner 0093624846017 (Arvato) (Linkin Park/D.Gilmore/R.Rubin/Phoenix/C.Roddick/J.Green/A.Dawson)
26	15	54	**Taylor Swift** Lover EMI 7792868 (UDS) ★2 (Dukes/Bell/Swift/Antonoff/Little/Sounwave)
27	21	129	**Fleetwood Mac** Rumours Rhino/Warner 8122796778 (Arvato) ★14 (Fleetwood Mac/R.Dashut/K.Caillat)
28	32	113	**Amy Winehouse** Back To Black Island 1713041 (UDS) ★14 (Ronson/Salaamremi.com)
29	13	7	**Taylor Swift** 1989 (Taylor's Version) EMI 5597659 (UDS) ★ (T.Swift/J.Antonoff/R.Tedder/N.Zancanella/C.Rowe/Shellback/I.Heap/P.Berger)
30	31	2	**Benson Boone** Fireworks & Rollerblades Warner 0093624852483 (Arvato) (Captain Cuts/C.McDonough/R.McDonough/Farber/Hodges/Blair/Royal/Evigan/Suwito/Levine/JT Daly/Malay/Rayman...)
31	Re-Entry		**Teddy Swims** I've Tried Everything But Therapy – Pt 1 Atlantic 93624856757 (Arvato) ● (Bunetta/Teplin/Shweez/Ammo/Wells/Scibilia/Jackson/Blackwell/Crichton/Ryan/Kendo)
32	New		**Gunna** One Of Wun 300 Ent. 0075679660336 (Arvato) (254Bodi/A.Bow/A.Denim/Aviator Keyyz/Byrd/cacija/Rance/D.Oskar/Dunk Rock/Evince/EVRGRN/Flo/Fritz/G.Lucas/G.Toomey...)
33	19	20	**Taylor Swift** Midnights EMI 4579009 (UDS) ★2 (J.Antonoff/T.Swift/J.Sweet/B.Cook/Sounwave/Keanu Beats/A.Dessner)
34	20	46	**Taylor Swift** Folklore EMI 0602435034805 (UDS) ★2 (Dessner/Antonoff/Swift)
35	35	3	**CoComelon** Nursery Rhymes By CoComelon Moonbug Ent. 5056317198645 (UDS) ● (Treasure Studio)
36	36	56	**Lana Del Rey** Born To Die Polydor 2787091 (UDS) ★5 (Haynie/Parker/Berger/Robopop/Bhasker/Daly/Sneddon/Bauer-Mein/Nowels/Braide/Shux/Skarbek/Howe)
37	28	39	**Taylor Swift** Reputation EMI 3003310 (UDS) ★2 (Antonoff/Swift/Martin/Shellback/Payami/Görres/Holter)
38	37	78	**Maroon 5** Singles Interscope 4754556 (UDS) ★2 (Maroon 5/Wallace/Endert/B.Blanco/MaxMartin/Shellback/Robopop/Stent/Farrar/Lange/Zancanella/Levine/MdL/Ammo...)
39	41	106	**Oasis** (What's The Story) Morning Glory? Big Brother RKIDCD007 (The Orchard/Proper) ★17 (Morris/Gallagher)
40	38	87	**Ed Sheeran** ÷ Asylum 0190295859039 (Arvato) ★14 (Mac/Sheeran/Elizondo/Hicks/B.Blanco/McDaid/Killbeatz/Labrinth)
41	43	52	**Elvis Presley** Elv1s: 30 #1 Hits RCA 07863680792 (UDS) ★7 (S.Sholes/E.Presley/L.Newman/W.Scharf/J.Leiber/M.Stoller/Chet Atkins/B.Porter/C.Moman/F.Jarvis/S.Phillips/R.Hull)
42	42	22	**Eminem** Curtain Call 2 Interscope 4817107 (UDS) ● (Eminem/Aalias/Alex da Kid/Villasana/Battle Roy/BJ Burton/Boi-1da/d.a. got that dope/DJ Khalil/Dr. Dre/DVLP/Haynie/Filthy...)
43	48	73	**Katy Perry** Teenage Dream Virgin CDV3084 (UDS) ★6 (Dr. Luke/Blanco/Martin/StarGate/Stewart/Harrell/Ammo/Wells)
44	47	84	**George Michael** Twenty Five Aegean 88697009002 (UDS) ★5 (G.Michael)
45	40	33	**50 Cent** Best Of Polydor/UMR 5741146 (UDS) ★ (Dr.Dre/Elizondo/Dirty Swift/ Mr.Porter/Dangerous LLC/Storch/B-Money "B$"/ Hi-Tek/C. Styles/Sire/Timbaland/Danja...)
46	45	24	**Pitbull** Greatest Hits RCA 88985498712 (UDS) ★ (Pitbull/Afrojack/Dr.Luke/Cirkut/Sermstyle/N.Seeley/N.Fasano/TJR/C.Lake/J.Jonsin/S.Vee/RedOne/Rush/Jimmy Joker...)
47	New		**Chappell Roan** The Rise And Fall Of A Midwest Princess Island 5832134 (UDS) (D.Nigro/J.Shy/Lixa/M.Wise/N.Conrad/R.Linvill)
48	65	10	**Travis Scott** Utopia RCA 0196871341882 (UDS) ● (30 Roc/The Alchemist/Ritter/ANTHRO/Beyoncé/BNYX/Boi-1da/BoogzDaBeast/Buddy Ross/Cadenza/Coleman...)
49	64	91	**Red Hot Chili Peppers** Greatest Hits Warner 9362485452 (Arvato) ★6 (Rubin/Beinhorn)
50	49	31	**Little Mix** Between Us RCA 19439926272 (UDS) ★ (S.Mac/Bloodshy/Taroncher/Guetta/Saint Fleur/Electric/Duars/Goldfingers/Reynolds/Ashurst/Kearns/Goldstein/Class...)
51	59	35	**Whitney Houston** I Will Always Love You – The Best Of... Arista 88765413932 (UDS) ★ (Kashif/Masser/NM Walden/Babyface/"LA" Reid/Foster/Clivillés/Cole/Duplessis/Wyclef/Tricky/Kiriakou/Mason/Dupri/Cox...I)
52	Re-Entry		**Keane** Hopes And Fears Island/UMR 1735846 (UDS) ★9 (A.Green/Keane/J.Sanger)
53	57	19	**Foo Fighters** The Essential Sony Music CG 19658737752 (UDS) ● (G.Norton/G.Kurstin/Foo Fighters/N.Raskulinecz/Butch Vig/B.Jones/A.Kasper)
54	Re-Entry		**Xxxtentacion** Look At Me: The Album Columbia 0196589226808 (UDS) ● (Canis Major/Xxxtentacion/Fifty Grand/Willie G/Kellbender/Hellion/King Yosef/Ronny J/Potsu/J.Cunningham...)
55	50	25	**Harry Styles** Harry's House Columbia 19658707272 (UDS) ★2 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson/S.Witte)
56	53	11	**Joel Corry** Another Friday Night Atlantic 5054197751769 (Arvato) ● (Billen Ted/BI3ss/Guetta/Digital Farm Animals/Tuinfort/Jax Jones/Corry/Kolidescopes/Thompson/MoJam/Dawe...)
57	46	61	**Lewis Capaldi** Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent EMI 7747307 (UDS) ★5 (Atkinson/Holloway/Earp/Capaldi/TMS/Cook/Pillai/Sneddon/JR Ho)
58	55	66	**Billy Joel** Piano Man: The Very Best Of Billy Joel Columbia 82876823592 (UDS) ★4 (Ramone/Stewart/Joel/Jones)
59	68	60	**Green Day** Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band Reprise 0093624909170 (Arvato) ★ (Ernst/Green Day/Cavallo/Vig/B.J Armstrong)
60	44	16	**The Beatles** 1967-1970 Apple Corps BLUE6770 (UDS) ★3 (G.Martin/P.Spector)
61	54	21	**The Smiths** The Sound Of The Smiths Rhino 2564693709 (Arvato) ★2 (Porter/The Smiths/Pusey/Griffin/Street)
62	52	29	**Kanye West** Graduation Roc-a-fella 1745502 (UDS) ★2 (West/Miller/Dean/DJ Toomp/Campbell/Robertson/Plain Pat/Hudson/Brion/Tommy D/Nottz/Daniels)
63	New		**St. Vincent** All Born Screaming Total Pleasure 2283417 (Virgin/UDS) (St. Vincent)
64	67	91	**David Bowie** Legacy Parlophone 0190295919900 (Arvato) ★3 (Rodgers/Bowie/Visconti/Queen/Scott/Dudgeon/Maslin/Winstanley)
65	New		**Bruce Springsteen** Best Of Bruce Springsteen Sony Music CG 19658862462 (UDS) (Springsteen/Appel/Cretecos/Landau/Van Zandt/Plotkin/Bittan/O'Brien/Aniello)
66	Re-Entry		**Dua Lipa** Dua Lipa Warner 0190295938482 (Arvato) ★3 (Kozmeniuk/Axident/Big Taste/Miguel/J.Reynolds/Digital Farm Animals/Principato/Levine/Wells/Grades/Kirkpatrick/...)
67	New		**Jess Glynne** Jess EMI EMICD2109 (UDS) (KnoxBrown/Digi/P2J/Glynne/Malay/Mac/Patterson/Kurstin/Sub Focus/Green/DaHeala/Coffeen/Haynie/Jim-E Stack...)
68	New		**Laufey** Bewitched AWAL/Laufey LAULP003CD (The Orchard/Proper) (Laufey/S.Stewart/D.Wilson/Philharmonia Orchestra)
69	Re-Entry		**Bruno Mars** Doo-Wops & Hooligans Elektra 0075678833250 (Arvato) ★7 (The Smeezingtons/Needlz/The Supa Dups)
70	70	10	**The Beatles** 1962-1966 Apple Corps 5592076 (UDS) ★3 (G.Martin)
71	Re-Entry		**Billie Eilish** Happier Than Ever Interscope 3597367 (UDS) ★ (Finneas)
72	74	111	**Arctic Monkeys** Whatever People Say I Am, That's... Domino WIGCD162 (Integral UDS) ★7 (Abbiss/Smyth)
73	71	49	**Rihanna** Good Girl Gone Bad Def Jam 1771728 (UDS) ★7 (Tricky Stewart/JR Rotem/StarGate/E.Rogers/C.Sturken/Neo Da Matrix/Timbaland/Hannon Lane/Shea Taylor/Ne-Yo)
74	75	6	**The Killers** Rebel Diamonds EMI 5858394 (UDS) ● (TheKillers/Moulder/O'Brien/Taylor/Alkan/Flood/JacknifeLee/Saltzman/Rado/Everett/Lillywhite/Price)
75	Re-Entry		**Billie Eilish** When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? Interscope 7742762 (UDS) ★3 (F.O'Connell)

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ANALYSIS

***Music Week* digs into the month's top chart stories...**

New Eras: *Taylor Swift*

POETRY SLAM

TAYLOR SWIFT

The Tortured Poets Department (EMI)

01

SALES: 136,356

Ahead of the scheduled arrival of her Eras tour in the UK in June, Taylor Swift topped the albums rankings for a second consecutive month. Swift's 11th studio album has so far spent four non-consecutive weeks at the summit thanks to a combination of strong streaming and physical consumption, including shipments of CD variants which boosted the sales of that format at the end of May. The Tortured Poets Department has amassed sales of 447,084, including 219,789 physical copies, 210,183 streaming-equivalent sales and 17,112 digital downloads. TTPD is 2024's biggest-selling album to date and will be hard to catch as we reach the midway point of the year.

HIT PARADE

BILLIE EILISH

Hit Me Hard And Soft (Polydor)

02

SALES: 67,111

Billie Eilish had the best opening week of her career with Hit Me Hard And Soft, which became her third consecutive No.1 with sales of 67,111. That was well up on the opening for Eilish's 2019 debut, When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? (48,410), and the 2021 follow-up, Happier Than Ever (38,855). Hit Me Hard And Soft's week one sales included 18,216 vinyl LPs, 12,699 CDs, 2,231 cassettes, 2,014 downloads and 31,951 from streams.

Hard to beat: *Billie Eilish*

DUA THE MATH

DUA LIPA

Radical Optimism (Warner Records)

03

SALES: 62,099

Dua Lipa was another star returning to the charts with increased week one sales for a third studio album last month. Radical Optimism became her first record to debut at the summit, which it did in some style with 46,298 units (13,388 CDs, 16,772 vinyl albums, 4,779 cassettes, 1,414 digital downloads and 9,945 sales-equivalent streams). It has gone on to attain silver BPI certification within its first month with consumption of 62,099 units.

PRIME TIME

OASIS

Time Flies – 1994-2009 (Big Brother/Sony)

21

SALES: 15,744

Rumours of an Oasis reunion last month were sparked by a cryptic social media post, which turned out to be the teaser for a 30-year anniversary reissue of Definitely Maybe. Consumption of the band's debut is already improving, but it's their hits set Time Flies – 1994-2009 that leads the way with a 5.8% increase last month followed by (What's The Story) Morning Glory? at No.39 (11,556 sales, up 6.2%).

STAIRS LIFT

ZAYN

Room Under The Stairs (Island)

24

SALES: 15,275

Zayn Malik is the most prolific albums artist from One Direction with four releases in eight years. He charted at No.1 with 2016 debut Mind Of Mine, but subsequent releases fared less well. For the songs on his new album, Malik experimented with country and it's paid off with a No.3 result in the weekly chart. Room Under The Stairs ended the month at No.24 with 15,275 sales.

WUN-DERFUL

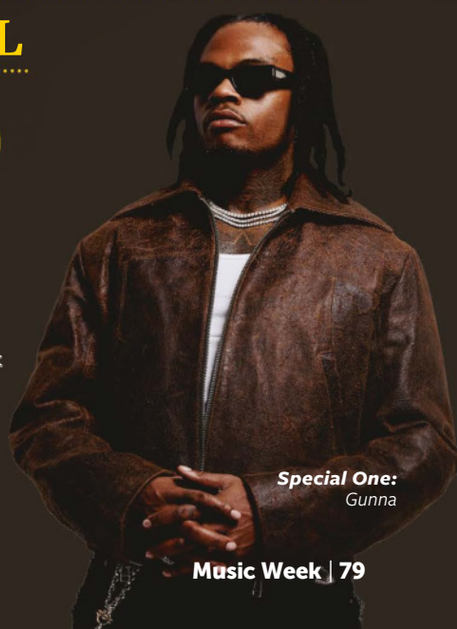
GUNNA

One Of Wun (300 Entertainment)

32

SALES: 13,359

Gunna scored his sixth chart album with One Of Wun, which became his fourth straight Top 10 entry. The US rapper equalled his best placing with a No.4 debut (8,196 sales). The title track was the most successful of the LP's singles chart entries, peaking at No.32 in the weekly rankings. Gunna also had a Top 40 hit last month with Jump alongside Tyla and Skillibeng.



Special One: *Gunna*

PHOTOS: Beth Garrabrant, Petros Studio

MAY CHART WEEKS 18-21

Music Week Market Shares

Artist Singles share for the month measures share of the Top 75 best performing tracks of the month, across sales and audio streams.
Artist Albums share for the month measures share of the Top 75 Official Albums Chart.
AES = Album Equivalent Sales. SEA = Stream Equivalent Albums

THIS MONTH'S CHART SHARE

TOP 75 CHART BY CORPORATE GROUP

SINGLES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	48.30%
2	WARNER MUSIC	22.52%
3	SONY MUSIC	15.83%
4	EMPIRE	3.29%
5	CONCORD	2.77%
	OTHERS	7.29%

ARTIST ALBUMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	59.28%
2	WARNER MUSIC	21.30%
3	SONY MUSIC	15.42%
4	DOMINO	1.93%
5	XTRA MILE	1.37%
	OTHERS	0.71%

ALL ALBUMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	58.24%
2	WARNER MUSIC	21.89%
3	SONY MUSIC	15.23%
4	DOMINO	1.91%
5	XTRA MILE	1.35%
	OTHERS	1.38%

TOP 75 CHART BY RECORD COMPANY

SINGLES
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	21.20%
2	WARNER-PARL	16.55%
3	ISLAND	12.52%
4	POLYDOR	11.90%
5	COLUMBIA	6.79%
6	RCA	6.18%
7	ATLANTIC	5.18%
8	EMPIRE	3.29%
9	CONCORD	2.77%
10	AWAL	2.30%
11	POLYDOR/WARNER-PARL	1.94%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.88%
13	ARTIST PARTNER GROUP	1.12%
14	ISLAND/RCA	1.05%
15	SONY MUSIC CG	1.04%
	OTHERS	4.30%

ARTIST ALBUMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	23.86%
2	POLYDOR	19.70%
3	WARNER-PARL	13.03%
4	ISLAND	12.48%
5	RCA	9.33%
6	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.70%
7	ATLANTIC	3.58%
8	SONY MUSIC CG	2.30%
9	BIG BROTHER	2.21%
10	DOMINO	1.93%
11	COLUMBIA	1.57%
12	UMR	1.47%
13	XTRA MILE	1.37%
14	DECCA	1.02%
15	VIRGIN MUSIC	0.75%
	OTHERS	0.71%

ALL ALBUMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	22.22%
2	POLYDOR	18.79%
3	WARNER-PARL	12.87%
4	ISLAND	12.33%
5	RCA	9.22%
6	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.64%
7	ATLANTIC	4.38%
8	UMR	3.15%
9	SONY MUSIC CG	2.27%
10	BIG BROTHER	2.18%
11	DOMINO	1.91%
12	COLUMBIA	1.55%
13	XTRA MILE	1.35%
14	DECCA	1.01%
15	VIRGIN MUSIC	0.74%
	OTHERS	1.38%

THIS MONTH'S TOTAL MARKET SHARE

BY CORPORATE GROUP

SINGLES STREAMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.1%
2	SONY MUSIC	20.1%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.1%
4	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
5	BMG	1.1%
	OTHERS	26.6%

SINGLES SALES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	33.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.0%
3	WARNER MUSIC	16.3%
4	BMG	1.9%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
	OTHERS	28.0%

ARTIST ALBUM SALES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.0%
2	WARNER MUSIC	17.0%
3	SONY MUSIC	10.9%
4	BMG	3.3%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.9%
	OTHERS	31.9%

BY RECORD COMPANY

SINGLES STREAMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	10.8%
3	POLYDOR	9.7%
4	ISLAND	8.2%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.3%
6	COLUMBIA	6.3%
7	ATLANTIC	5.7%
8	UMR	2.2%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.6%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.5%
11	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.4%
12	DECCA	1.3%
13	BMG	0.6%
14	XL RECORDINGS	0.6%
15	0207 DEF JAM	0.6%
	OTHERS	31.2%

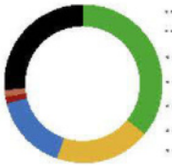
SINGLES SALES
NO. 1 RCA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	RCA	10.9%
2	EMI	10.8%
3	WARNER-PARL	8.6%
4	POLYDOR	8.6%
5	ISLAND	7.0%
6	COLUMBIA	5.5%
7	ATLANTIC	4.8%
8	UMR	2.7%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.0%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.8%
11	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.5%
12	DECCA	1.3%
13	BMG	1.2%
14	EMPIRE	0.7%
15	XL RECORDINGS	0.6%
	OTHERS	31.9%

ARTIST ALBUM SALES
NO. 1 WARNER-PARL

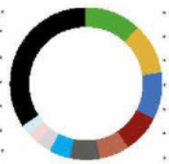
TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	WARNER-PARL	10.3%
2	POLYDOR	9.8%
3	EMI	9.6%
4	ISLAND	5.7%
5	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.3%
6	SONY MUSIC CG	3.6%
7	RCA	3.6%
8	UMR	3.0%
9	COLUMBIA	2.7%
10	BMG	2.6%
11	VIRGIN MUSIC	2.4%
12	DECCA	2.3%
13	ATLANTIC	2.0%
14	DOMINO	1.4%
15	XTRA MILE	1.2%
	OTHERS	35.4%

AES (ALL ALBUMS)
TOTAL MARKET - THIS MONTH



1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.3%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.4%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.2%
4	BMG	1.4%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.2%
	OTHERS	26.5%

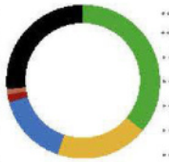
BY CORPORATE GROUP



1	EMI	11.0%
2	RCA	10.1%
3	POLYDOR	9.6%
4	ISLAND	7.9%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.6%
6	COLUMBIA	6.0%
7	ATLANTIC	5.3%
8	UMR	2.5%
9	SONY MUSIC CG	2.0%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.9%
	OTHERS	36.3%

BY RECORD COMPANY

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS)



1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.2%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.3%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.3%
4	BMG	1.3%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.2%
	OTHERS	26.7%

BY CORPORATE GROUP

1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	10.2%
3	POLYDOR	9.6%
4	ISLAND	8.0%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.7%
6	COLUMBIA	6.0%
7	ATLANTIC	5.3%
8	UMR	2.3%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.9%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.7%
	OTHERS	36.3%

BY RECORD COMPANY

MARKET STATISTICS - THIS MONTH

DATE	SINGLES				ARTIST ALBUMS				COMPS	ALL ALBUMS		
	SALES	AUDIO STREAMS	VIDEO STREAMS	TOTAL	PHYSICAL	DOWNLOADS	SEA2	TOTAL	TOTAL	SALES	SEA2	TOTAL
THIS MONTH	1,115,466	13,453,782,432	841,005,155	121,356,853	1,071,699	167,451	8,271,910	9,511,060	319,656	1,376,782	8,453,934	9,830,716
LAST MONTH	1,115,705	12,778,567,310	810,965,108	115,246,488	1,342,695	180,232	7,970,923	9,493,850	323,927	1,679,524	8,138,252	9,817,777
% CHANGE	0.0%	5.3%	3.7%	5.3%	-20.2%	-7.1%	3.8%	0.2%	-1.3%	-18.0%	3.9%	0.1%

Your essential guide to the market shares for this month and 2024. Compiled from Official Charts Company data.

Official Charts Company

YEAR-TO-DATE TOTAL MARKET SHARE

BY CORPORATE GROUP

COMPILATION SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	42.9%
2	SONY MUSIC	31.9%
3	BMG	4.9%
4	WARNER MUSIC	4.3%
5	DEMON MUSIC	1.1%
	OTHERS	14.8%

ALL ALBUM SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.8%
2	WARNER MUSIC	15.7%
3	SONY MUSIC	13.0%
4	BMG	3.5%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.7%
	OTHERS	30.3%

SINGLES STREAMS NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.8%
3	WARNER MUSIC	14.8%
4	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
5	BMG	1.1%
	OTHERS	26.5%

SINGLES SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	32.2%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.9%
3	WARNER MUSIC	17.1%
4	BMG	2.3%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
	OTHERS	27.5%

AES (ALL ALBUMS) NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.3%
3	WARNER MUSIC	14.8%
4	BMG	1.4%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.3%
	OTHERS	26.4%

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS) NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	36.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.2%
3	WARNER MUSIC	14.9%
4	BMG	1.4%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.3%
	OTHERS	26.5%

BY RECORD COMPANY

COMPILATION SALES NO. 1 SONY CG

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	SONY MUSIC CG	27.5%
2	EMI	18.7%
3	UMR	16.2%
4	BMG	3.5%
5	POLYDOR	3.0%
6	COLUMBIA	2.9%
7	DECCA	1.8%
8	ISLAND	1.7%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.6%
10	ATLANTIC	1.4%
11	RCA	1.3%
12	UNION SQUARE	1.2%
13	DEMON MUSIC	1.1%
14	CHERRY RED	1.1%
15	NEW STATE	1.1%
	OTHERS	15.8%

ALL ALBUM SALES NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.5%
2	WARNER-PARL	9.4%
3	POLYDOR	9.2%
4	SONY MUSIC CG	6.0%
5	ISLAND	5.3%
6	UMR	4.3%
7	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.0%
8	RCA	3.3%
9	COLUMBIA	2.7%
10	BMG	2.7%
11	DECCA	2.2%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	2.2%
13	ATLANTIC	2.0%
14	DOMINO	1.3%
15	XTRA MILE	1.1%
	OTHERS	33.8%

SINGLES STREAMS NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	10.7%
3	POLYDOR	9.6%
4	ISLAND	8.6%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.0%
6	COLUMBIA	6.2%
7	ATLANTIC	5.8%
8	UMR	2.2%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.6%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.5%
11	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.4%
12	DECCA	1.4%
13	XL RECORDINGS	0.7%
14	BMG	0.7%
15	0207 DEF JAM	0.6%
	OTHERS	31.2%

SINGLES SALES NO. 1 RCA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	RCA	11.9%
2	EMI	9.7%
3	WARNER-PARL	8.7%
4	POLYDOR	8.3%
5	ISLAND	7.3%
6	ATLANTIC	5.4%
7	COLUMBIA	5.3%
8	UMR	2.7%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.2%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.7%
11	BMG	1.5%
12	DECCA	1.4%
13	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.0%
14	XL RECORDINGS	0.6%
15	DEMON MUSIC	0.5%
	OTHERS	31.9%

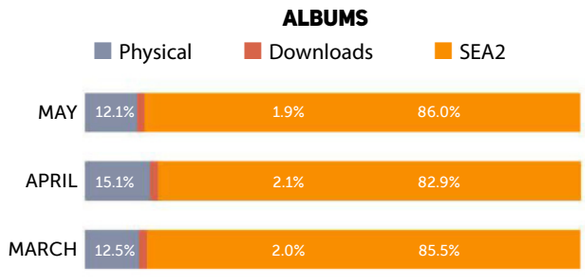
AES (ALL ALBUMS) NO. 1 EMI

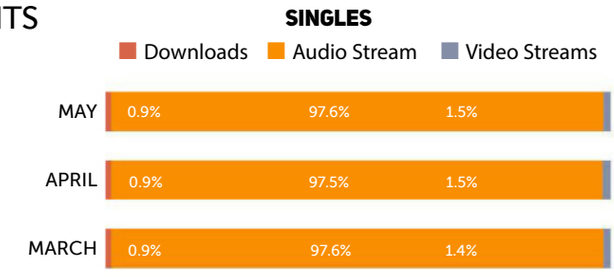
TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	11.1%
2	RCA	10.1%
3	POLYDOR	9.2%
4	ISLAND	8.2%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.0%
6	COLUMBIA	5.9%
7	ATLANTIC	5.4%
8	UMR	2.5%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.0%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	2.0%
11	DECCA	1.6%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.4%
13	BMG	1.0%
14	XL RECORDINGS	0.7%
15	0207 DEF JAM	0.6%
	OTHERS	31.3%

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS) NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	11.1%
2	RCA	10.2%
3	POLYDOR	9.3%
4	ISLAND	8.3%
5	WARNER-PARL	7.0%
6	COLUMBIA	5.9%
7	ATLANTIC	5.4%
8	UMR	2.4%
9	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.0%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	1.7%
11	DECCA	1.6%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.4%
13	BMG	0.9%
14	XL RECORDINGS	0.7%
15	0207 DEF JAM	0.6%
	OTHERS	31.4%

FORMAT SPLITS





MARKET STATISTICS - YEAR-TO-DATE

DATE	SINGLES				ARTIST ALBUMS				COMPS	ALL ALBUMS		
	SALES	AUDIO STREAMS	VIDEO STREAMS	TOTAL	PHYSICAL	DOWNLOADS	SEA2	TOTAL	TOTAL	SALES	SEA2	TOTAL
THIS YEAR	5,853,548	66,962,815,380	4,101,043,575	605,212,903	5,921,545	875,544	41,875,221	48,672,310	1,678,774	7,541,783	42,809,301	50,351,084
LAST YEAR	6,234,722	60,330,122,643	3,954,295,728	546,645,813	5,599,710	931,365	37,611,179	44,142,254	1,579,697	7,369,093	38,352,858	45,721,951
% CHANGE	-6.1%	11.0%	3.7%	10.7%	5.7%	-6.0%	11.3%	10.3%	6.3%	2.3%	11.6%	10.1%

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OFFICIAL UK STREAMING TOP 50

Official Streaming Chart

PHOTO: Official Charts Company

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Sabrina Carpenter	Espresso	*Island*
2	Hozier	Too Sweet	*Island*
3	Shaboozey	A Bar Song (Tipsy)	*American Dogwood/Empire*
4	Benson Boone	Beautiful Things	*Warner*
5	Taylor Swift Ft Post Malone	Fortnight	*EMI*
6	Tommy Richman	Million Dollar Baby	*ISO Supremacy/Pulse*
7	Artemas	I Like The Way You Kiss Me	*Parlophone*
8	Noah Kahan	Stick Season	*Republic*
9	Teddy Swims	Lose Control	*Atlantic*
10	Dasha	Austin	*Warner*
11	Kendrick Lamar	Not Like Us	*Interscope*
12	Taylor Swift	I Can Do It With A Broken Heart	*EMI*
13	Post Malone Ft Morgan Wallen	I Had Some Help	*Republic*
14	Mark Ambor	Belong Together	*Hundred Days*
15	Beyoncé	Texas Hold 'Em	*Columbia/Parkwood Ent.*
16	Ariana Grande	We Can't Be Friends (Wait For Your Love)	*Republic*
17	Cassö, Raye & D Block Europe	Prada	*Ministry Of Sound*
18	Michael Marcagi	Scared To Start	*Warner*
19	Djo	End Of Beginning	*AWAL/Djo*
20	Taylor Swift	Down Bad	*EMI*
21	Lay Bankz	Tell Ur Girlfriend	*Artist Partner Group*
22	NewEra	Birds In The Sky	*Warner*
23	The Blessed Madonna Ft Clementine Douglas	Happier	*FFRR*
24	Tate McRae	Greedy	*Ministry Of Sound*
25	Taylor Swift	Who's Afraid Of Little Old Me?	*EMI*
26	Benson Boone	Slow It Down	*Warner*
27	Kendrick Lamar	Euphoria	*Interscope*
28	Chappell Roan	Good Luck, Babe!	*Island*
29	Dua Lipa	Illusion	*Warner*
30	Taylor Swift	Cruel Summer	*EMI*
31	Taylor Swift	But Daddy I Love Him	*EMI*
32	David Guetta & OneRepublic	I Don't Wanna Wait	*Interscope/Parlophone*
33	Future, Metro Boomin & Kendrick Lamar	Like That	*Epic/Freebandz/Republic*
34	Taylor Swift	So Long, London	*EMI*
35	Ella Henderson & Rudimental	Alibi	*Atlantic*
36	Taylor Swift	The Tortured Poets Department	*EMI*
37	Taylor Swift Ft Florence + The Machine	Florida!!!	*EMI*
38	Natasha Bedingfield	Unwritten	*Phonogenic*
39	Taylor Swift	My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys	*EMI*
40	Sonny Fodera & MK Ft Clemetine Douglas	Asking	*Solotoko*
41	The Killers	Mr Brightside	*Vertigo*
42	Taylor Swift	Guilty As Sin?	*EMI*
43	Badger & Natasha Bedingfield	These Words	*Cheeky*
44	SZA	Saturn	*RCA/Top Dawg*
45	Bakar	Hell N Back	*Black Butter*
46	Myles Smith	Stargazing	*RCA*
47	Rudimental & Skepsis Ft Charlotte Plank & Riko Dan	Green & Gold	*Columbia*
48	Bryson Tiller	Whatever She Wants	*Relentless*
49	Billie Eilish	Lunch	*Interscope*
50	Taylor Swift	The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived	*EMI*

OFFICIAL COMPILATIONS TOP 50

TM	TITLE	LABEL	DISTRIBUTOR
1	Eurovision Song Contest Malmö 2024	Universal	UDS
2	The Greatest Showman – OST	Atlantic	Arvato
3	Hazbin Hotel: Season One – OST	A24	Secretly
4	Hamilton	Atlantic	Arvato
5	Now That's What I Call Music! 117	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
6	Now Yearbook 1974	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
7	Mamma Mia!	Polydor	UDS
8	Suicide Squad: The Album – OST	Atlantic	Arvato
9	Disney's Lullaby Album	Walt Disney	UDS
10	Moana – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
11	Barbie The Album – OST	Atlantic	Arvato
12	Frozen – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
13	Wish – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
14	Six: The Musical	Loud Mouth	Absolute UDS
15	Encanto – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
16	Fifty Shades Of Grey – OST	Republic	UDS
17	Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again	Polydor	UDS
18	The Lion King – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
19	Frozen II – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
20	Eurovision Song Contest: Liverpool 2023	UMR	UDS
21	Grease – OST	Polydor	UDS
22	The Idea Of You – OST	Sony Music CG	UDS
23	Sing – OST	Republic	UDS
24	#2s & #3s – 70s	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
25	Phil Collins Plays Well With Others	Rhino	Arvato
26	Metro Boomin Pts Spider-Man: Across...	Republic	UDS
27	The Best Northern Soul Album In The...	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
28	Now That's What I Call Jukebox Classics	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
29	Wonka	Mutant	ROM/UDS
30	Sing 2	Island	UDS
31	A Star Is Born – OST	Interscope	UDS
32	#2s & #3s – 60s	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
33	Trolls Band Together – OST	RCA	UDS
34	Now That's What I Call Country (2024)	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
35	La La Land – OST	Interscope/Polydor	UDS
36	The Best Pop Album In The World... Ever!	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
37	The Hits Album: Floorfillers – Throwback...	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
38	Ultimate Dad	The Ultimate Collection USM	ADA Arvato
39	The Hits Album: The Country Album	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
40	Wicked	Decca	UDS
41	Aladdin – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
42	Now That's What I Call Pop Gold	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
43	The Fault In Our Stars – OST	Atlantic	Arvato
44	Now That's What I Call Unforgettable	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
45	Descendants 3 – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
46	Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse – OST	Republic	UDS
47	Now That's What I Call 40 Years	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
48	Dear Evan Hansen	Atlantic	Arvato
49	The Best 80s Movies Album In The World... Ever!	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
50	Pitch Perfect – OST	Island	UDS

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Official Charts Company

OFFICIAL VINYL TOP 50s

OFFICIAL VINYL SINGLES

PHOTO: Ed Miles

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	OMD	Kleptocracy	100%
2	Perrie	Forget About Us	Columbia
3	Depeche Mode	Before We Drown	Columbia
4	The Lovely Eggs	Nothing/Everything	Egg
5	Olly Alexander	Dizzy	Polydor
6	Kate Bush	Eat The Music	Fish People
7	Queen	Cool Cat	EMI
8	Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds	In A Little While	Sour Mash
9	Dannii Minogue & Autone	Thinking 'Bout Us	Central Station
10	U2	Atomic City	Island
11	Kula Shaker	Rational Man	Strange Folk
12	Boygenius	Black Hole	Interscope
13	Oasis	Supersonic	Big Brother
14	Dana Gillespie	Spent The Day In Bed	Fretsore
15	Steps	Deeper Shade Of Blue	Jive
16	Morrissey & Siouxsie	Interlude	Parlophone
17	G.B.I	The Regulator	Megaforce
18	Lambrini Girls	God's Country	City Slang
19	The Charlatans	Indian Rope	Island
20	Nightbus	Exposed To Some Light	So Young
21	Olivia Rodrigo	Stick Season	Interscope
22	Ringo Starr	Crooked Boy	UMR
23	Everything But The Girl	At Maida Vale	Buzzin' Fly
24	Kneecap	Better Way To Live	Heavenly
25	Mark Knopfler	Mr Solomons Said	EMI
26	Cock Sparrer	Here We Stand	Captain Oi! / Cherry Red
27	Noah Kahan	Stick Season	Republic
28	New Order	Blue Monday	Rhino
29	Barry Gray	Stingray	Silva Screen
30	Last Dinner Party	Nothing Matters	Island
31	Barry Gray	UFO	Silva Screen
32	John Lennon	Mind Games	Apple Corps
33	Prefab Sprout	Lions In My Own Garden (Exit Someone)	Sony
34	Lulu	The Man With The Golden Gun	Demon
35	Miles Kane	Mr Midnight	Modern Sky
36	Pete Wylie & Mighty Wah	Heart As Big As Liverpool	Chrysalis
37	Air	Kelly Watch The Stars	Parlophone
38	ABBA	Waterloo	Polydor
39	Catfish & The Bottlemen	Showtime	Island
40	Tom Jones	It's Not Unusual	Decca
41	The Beatles	Now And Then	Apple Corps
42	Mark Knopfler's Guitar Heroes	Going Home (Theme From Local Hero)	BMG
43	Daft Punk	Something About Us	Parlophone
44	Josh Wink	Higher State Of Consciousness	Strictly Rhythm
45	Cigarettes After Sex	Nothing's Gonna Hurt You Baby	Spanish Prayers
46	Elton John	Step Into Christmas	Mercury
47	Wham!	Last Christmas	Epic
48	The Lightning Seeds	Pure	Virgin
49	Khruangbin & Leon Bridges	Texas Sun	Dead Oceans
50	Frank Turner	Girl From The Record Shop	Xtra Mile

OFFICIAL VINYL ALBUMS

PHOTO: Petros Studio

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Billie Eilish	Hit Me Hard And Soft	Interscope
2	Dua Lipa	Radical Optimism	Warner
3	Pet Shop Boys	Nonetheless	Parlophone
4	Taylor Swift	The Tortured Poets Department	EMI
5	Frank Turner	Undefeated	Xtra Mile
6	Kings Of Leon	Can We Please Have Fun	Polydor
7	Zayn	Room Under The Stairs	Republic
8	St. Vincent	All Born Screaming	Total Pleasure
9	Laufey	Bewitched	AWAL/Laufey
10	Keane	Hopes And Fears	Island/UMR
11	Beth Gibbons	Lives Outgrown	Domino
12	The Zutons	The Big Decider	ICEPOP
13	Michael Head & The Red...	Loophole	Modern Sky
14	Kelly Jones	Inevitable Incredible	Ignition
15	Amy Winehouse	Back To Black	Island
16	Portishead	Roseland, NYC Live	Island/UMR
17	Pink Floyd	The Dark Side Of The Moon	Rhino
18	Luke Hemmings	Boy	RCA
19	Camera Obscura	Look To The East, Look To The West	Merge
20	Fleetwood Mac	Rumours	WEA
21	Justice	Hyperdrama	Because
22	Arab Strap	I'm Totally Fine With It... Don't Give A F**k	Rock Action
23	Slash	Anymore	Gibson
24	Knocked Loose	Orgy Of The Damned	Pure Noise
25	The Lovely Eggs	You Won't Go Before You're Supposed To...	Egg
26	The Lemon Twigs	A Dream Is All We Know	Captured Tracks
27	The Fat White Family	Forgiveness Is Yours	Domino
28	Big Special	Postindustrial Hometown Blues	SO
29	Queen	Rock Montreal	Virgin
30	Bob Marley & The Wailers	Legend	Tuff Gong
31	Kamasi Washington	Fearless Movement	Young
32	Rachel Chinouriri	What A Devastating Turn Of Events	Parlophone
33	The Stone Roses	The Stone Roses	Silvertone
34	Beyoncé	Cowboy Carter	Columbia/Parkwood Ent.
35	Various	Now Yearbook 1974	Sony Music CG/EMI
36	Bring Me The Horizon	Sempiternal	RCA
37	Taylor Swift	1989 (Taylor's Version)	EMI
38	Peter Gabriel	I/O	Real World
39	Karma Effect	Promised Land	Earache
40	Jordan Rakei	The Loop	Decca
41	Villagers	That Golden Time	Domino
42	Shellac	To All Trains	Touch And Go
43	The Smiths	Hatful Of Hollow	WEA
44	Green Day	Warning	Warner
45	The Smiths	The Queen Is Dead	Rhino
46	Oasis	(What's The Story) Morning Glory	Big Brother
47	Def Leppard	Pyromania	Bludgeon Riffola
48	Taylor Swift	Folklore	EMI
49	Dea Matrona	For Your Sins	Dea Matrona
50	Jeff Buckley	Grace	Columbia/Legacy

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SPECIALIST ALBUMS TOP 20s

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OFFICIAL AMERICANA TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Noah Kahan	Stick Season	Republic
2	Kings Of Leon	Can We Please Have Fun	Polydor
3	Beyoncé	Cowboy Carter	Columbia/Parkwood Ent.
4	Frank Turner	Undefeated	Xtra Mile
5	Bruce Springsteen	Best Of	Sony Music CG
6	Kelly Jones	Inevitable Incredible	Ignition
7	Zach Bryan	Zach Bryan	Warner
8	The Karma Effect	Promised Land	Earache
9	Mark Knopfler	One Deep River	EMI
10	Camera Obscura	Look To The East, Look To The West	Merge
11	Myles Smith	You Promised A Lifetime	RCA
12	Zach Bryan	American Heartbreak	Warner
13	Kacey Musgraves	Deeper Well	Interscope
14	Neil Young & Crazy Horse	Fu**In' Up	Reprise
15	The Black Keys	Ohio Players	Nonesuch
16	Dea Matrona	For Your Sins	Dea Matrona
17	Lizzy McAlpine	Older	Columbia
18	Bailey Zimmerman	Religiously The Album	Parlophone
19	Adrianne Lenker	Bright Future	4Ad
20	Mitski	The Land Is Inhospitable And So Are We	Dead Oceans

OFFICIAL CLASSICAL ARTIST TOP 20 ALBUMS

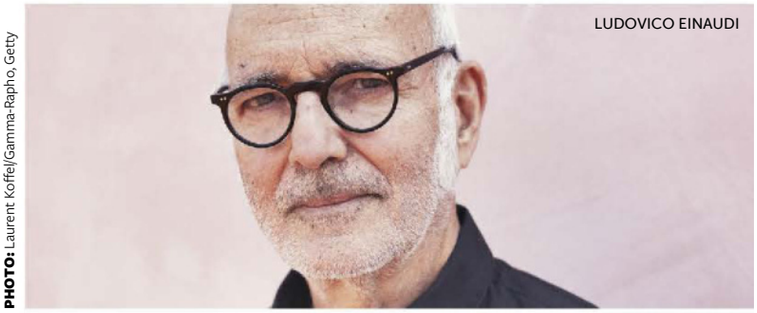
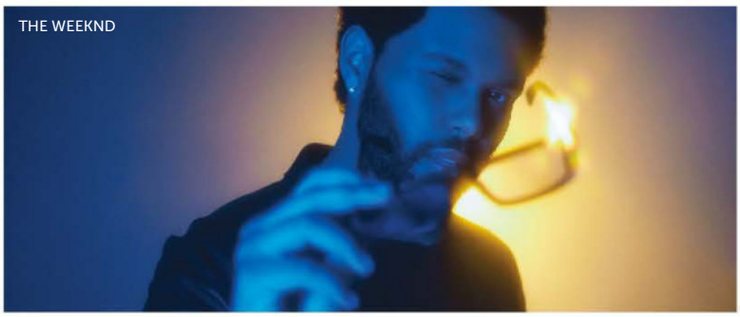


PHOTO: Laurent Koffel/Gamma-Rapho, Getty

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Ludovico Einaudi	Islands: Essential Einaudi	Decca
2	Max Richter	Sleep	Deutsche Grammophon
3	Alan Menken	The Little Mermaid – OST	Walt Disney
4	Jóhann Jóhannsson	The Theory Of Everything – OST	Back Lot
5	Ludovico Einaudi	Underwater	Decca
6	Ludovico Einaudi	In A Time Lapse	Decca
7	Howard Shore	The Lord Of The Rings: Trilogy – OST	Reprise
8	André Rieu & Johann Strauss Or.	Love Is All Around	Decca
9	Hans Zimmer & Lisa Gerrard	Gladiator – OST	Decca
10	LPO & Parry	The 50 Greatest Pieces Of Classical Music	X5
11	Ludwig Göransson	Oppenheimer – OST	Mondo
12	Max Richter	Voyager – Essential	Deutsche Grammophon
13	Howard Shore	The Lord Of The Rings – OST	Reprise
14	Ludovico Einaudi	The Royal Albert Hall Concert	Decca
15	Ludovico Einaudi	Una Mattina	Decca
16	Yunchan Lim	Chopin: Etudes, Opp. 10 & 25	Decca
17	Paul Mccreesh, Gabrieli Players...	Elgar: The Dream Of Gerontius	Signum
18	Max Richter	The Blue Notebooks	Deutsche Grammophon
19	Lang Lang	The Disney Book	Deutsche Grammophon
20	Lang Lang	Piano Book	Deutsche Grammophon

OFFICIAL HIP-HOP & R&B TOP 20 ALBUMS



TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	The Weeknd	The Highlights	Republic/XO
2	Eminem	Curtain Call: The Hits	Interscope
3	SZA	SOS	RCA
4	Post Malone	The Diamond Collection	Republic
5	Amy Winehouse	Back To Black	Island
6	Gunna	One Of Wun	300 Ent.
7	Eminem	Curtain Call 2	Interscope
8	50 Cent	Best Of	Polydor/UMR
9	Travis Scott	Utopia	RCA
10	Whitney Houston	I Will Always Love You: The Best Of...	Arista
11	Xxxtentacion	Look At Me: The Album	Columbia
12	Kanye West	Graduation	Roc-A-Fella
13	Rihanna	Good Girl Gone Bad	Def Jam
14	Partynextdoor	Partynextdoor 4 (P4)	OVO Sound
15	The Weeknd	Starboy	Republic/XO
16	Future & Metro Boomin	We Don't Trust You	RCA
17	Kendrick Lamar	Damn	Interscope
18	Frank Ocean	Blonde	Boys Don't Cry
19	Bugzy Malone	The Great British Dream	B Somebody
20	50 Cent	Get Rich Or Die Tryin'	Interscope

OFFICIAL JAZZ TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: Gemma Warren

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Laufey	Bewitched	AWAL/Laufey
2	Sade	The Best Of	Epic
3	Amy Winehouse	Frank	Island
4	Glen Miller	From Rags To Riches	Jazz Band
5	Kamasi Washington	Fearless Movement	Young
6	Sade	Lovers Live	Epic
7	Norah Jones	Come Away With Me	Blue Note
8	Sade	Lovers Rock	Epic
9	Ella Fitzgerald	Gold	Verve
10	Laufey	Everything I Know About Love	AWAL/Laufey
11	Nat King Cole	The Unforgettable	Virgin
12	Nat King Cole	The Absolutely Essential Collection	Big 3
13	Sade	Love Deluxe	Epic
14	Nat King Cole	The Very Best Of	Acrobat
15	Nat King Cole	Stardust	Woowi
16	Nina Simone	See-Line Woman: The Best Of...	Spectrum
17	Nina Simone	Feeling Good	Verve
18	Nat King Cole	The Nat King Cole Story	Black Sheep
19	Miles Davis	Kind Of Blue	Columbia
20	Norah Jones	iTunes Originals	Virgin

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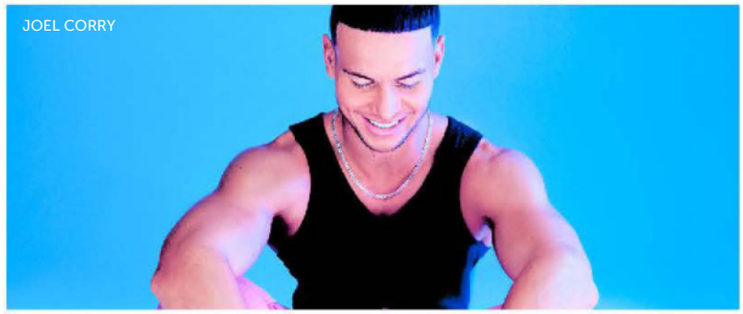
SPECIALIST ALBUMS TOP 20s

OFFICIAL COUNTRY ARTIST TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Beyoncé	Cowboy Carter	Columbia/Parkwood Ent.
2	Morgan Wallen	One Thing At A Time	Big Loud/EMI
3	Luke Combs	This One's For You	Sony Music CG
4	Taylor Swift	Fearless (Taylor's Version)	EMI
5	Zach Bryan	Zach Bryan	Warner
6	Luke Combs	Gettin' Old	Sony Music CG
7	Luke Combs	What You See Is What You Get	Sony Music CG
8	Morgan Wallen	Dangerous: The Double Album	Big Loud/EMI
9	Shania Twain	Come On Over	UMR
10	Zach Bryan	American Heartbreak	Warner
11	Taylor Swift	Taylor Swift	Mercury
12	Kacey Musgraves	Deeper Well	Interscope
13	Bailey Zimmerman	Religiously The Album	Parlophone
14	Luke Combs	Growin' Up	Sony Music CG
15	Lainey Wilson	Bell Bottom Country	Broken Bow
16	Chris Stapleton	Traveller	Mercury Nashville
17	Chris Stapleton	Higher	EMI
18	Glen Campbell	Adiós	UMR
19	Glen Campbell	Gentle On My Mind	UMR/Virgin
20	Jordan Davis	Bluebird Days	Snakefarm

OFFICIAL DANCE TOP 20 ALBUMS



TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Joel Corry	Another Friday Night	Atlantic
2	Fred Again..	USB	Atlantic
3	Tiësto	Drive	Atlantic
4	David Guetta	One Love	Parlophone
5	Calvin Harris	18 Months	Columbia
6	Justice	Hyperdrama	Because
7	Robin Schulz	Prayer	Atlantic
8	Meduza	Meduza	Island
9	David Guetta	Nothing But The Beat	Parlophone
10	David Guetta	Nothing But The Beat 2.0	Parlophone
11	Prodigy	Their Law – The Singles 1990-2005	XL
12	Portishead	Roseland NYC Live	Island/UMR
13	Disclosure	Settle	Island/UMR
14	Calvin Harris	Motion	Columbia
15	Major Lazer	Essentials	Because
16	Sigala	Every Cloud – Silver Linings	Ministry Of Sound
17	Jax Jones	Snacks	Polydor
18	Black Eyed Peas	The Beginning	Interscope
19	Sigala	Brighter Days	Ministry Of Sound
20	Britney Spears	B In The Mix: The Remixes – Vol 2	Jive

OFFICIAL FOLK TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Beth Gibbons	Lives Outgrown	Domino
2	Myles Smith	You Promised A Lifetime	RCA
3	Ferocious Dog	Kleptocracy	Graphite
4	Emily Barker	Fragile As Humans	Everyone Sang
5	Johnny Flynn & Robert Macfarlane	The Moon Also Rises	Transgressive
6	Kathryn Williams & Withered Hand	Wilson Williams	One Little Independent
7	Blue Rose Code	Bright Circumstance	Ronachan Songs
8	Katherine Priddy	The Pendulum Swing	Cooking Vinyl
9	The Staves	All Now	Communion
10	Martin Simpson	Skydancers	Topic
11	Fisherman's Friends	All Aboard	Island
12	Lankum	False Lankum	Rough Trade
13	The Mary Wallopers	Irish Rock N Roll	BC
14	Tumbling Paddies	The Journey So Far (Live)	Sharpe
15	Skerryvore	Tempus	Cooking Vinyl
16	Sam Lee	Songdreaming	Cooking Vinyl
17	Josienne Clarke	Parenthesis I	Corduroy Punk
18	ØXN	CYRM	Claddagh
19	Billie Marten	Drop Cherries	Fiction
20	This Is The Kit	Live At Minack Theatre	Rough Trade

OFFICIAL ROCK & METAL TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Linkin Park	Papercuts (Singles Collection 2000-2023)	Warner
2	Foo Fighters	The Essential	Sony Music CG
3	Green Day	Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band	Reprise
4	Nirvana	Nirvana	Geffen
5	Guns N' Roses	Greatest Hits	Geffen
6	Nickelback	The Best Of Nickelback, Vol 1	Rhino
7	AC/DC	Iron Man 2 – OST	Columbia
8	Nirvana	Nevermind	Geffen/UMR
9	Blink 182	Greatest Hits	Geffen
10	Linkin Park	Hybrid Theory	Warner
11	System Of A Down	System Of A Down	American
12	Slipknot	Antennas To Hell	Roadrunner
13	Guns N' Roses	Appetite For Destruction	Polydor/UMR
14	Green Day	American Idiot	Reprise
15	Sleep Token	Take Me Back To Eden	Spinefarm
16	Deftones	The Studio Album Collection	Reprise
17	Led Zeppelin	Mothership	Rhino
18	Limp Bizkit	Greatest Hitz	Geffen
19	My Chemical Romance	May Death Never Stop You	Reprise
20	Pearl Jam	Dark Matter	EMI

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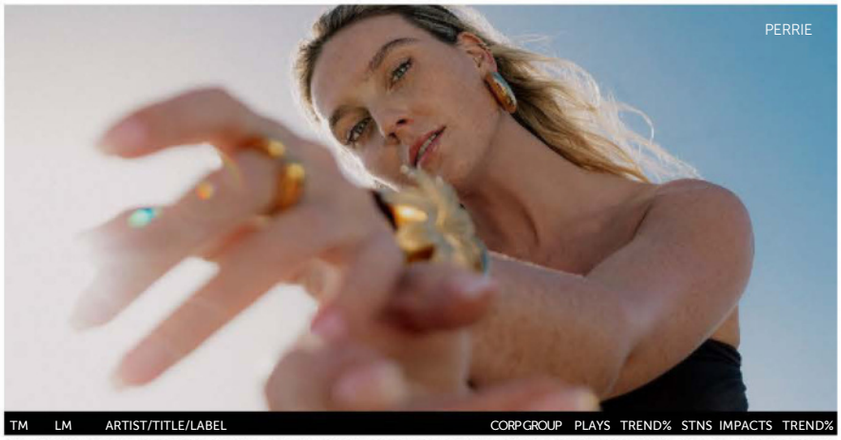
UK AIRPLAY

CHARTS KEY
HIGHEST NEW ENTRY
HIGHEST CLIMBER
PLAY/AUDIENCE INCREASE
TREND INCREASE +50%

RADIO MONITOR we're always listening

Music Week's UK and EU Radio Airplay chart based on RadioMonitor data ©.

UK RADIO AIRPLAY TOP 50



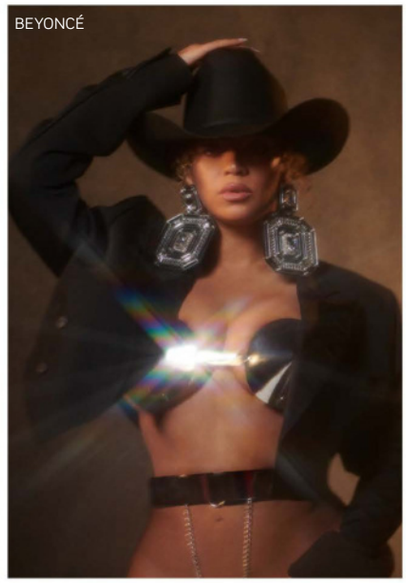
TM	LM	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	TREND%	STNS	IMPACTS	TREND%
1	5	Perrie Forget About Us Columbia	SME	27,590	148%	232	260.98	70%
2	22	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso Island	UMG	18,813	307%	231	227.76	208%
3	29	Taylor Swift Ft Post Malone Fortnight EMI	UMG	18,217	410%	222	214.77	233%
4	9	Dasha Austin Warner	WMG	22,211	158%	219	212.83	74%
5	2	Teddy Swims Lose Control Atlantic	WMG	23,454	-16%	240	203.58	-10%
6	3	Noah Kahan Stick Season Republic	UMG	20,630	-9%	220	170.58	-6%
7	7	Hozier Too Sweet Island	UMG	15,378	222%	224	166.11	30%
8	4	Benson Boone Beautiful Things Warner	WMG	21,550	6%	214	157.79	-3%
9	15	Becky Hill Outside Of Love Polydor	UMG	14,480	22%	208	122.45	56%
10	NEW	Teddy Swims The Door Atlantic	WMG	9,361	321%	207	113.58	1351%
11	6	Calvin Harris & Rag'N'Bone Man Lovers In A Past Life Columbia	SME	18,255	-13%	242	111.28	-23%
12	16	Jax Jones & Zoe Wees Never Be Lonely Polydor	UMG	11,561	7%	148	99.47	29%
13	NEW	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy) American Dogwood/Empire	IND.	8,993	3386%	200	92.4	1982%
14	12	Rudimental & Skepsis Ft... Green & Gold Columbia	SME	6,405	0%	126	90.8	-1%
15	25	Ella Henderson & Rudimental Alibi Atlantic	WMG	13,012	6%	177	90.67	26%
16	NEW	David Guetta & OneRepublic I Don't... Interscope/Parlophone	WMG	11,619	137%	204	84.01	156%
17	8	Kygo & Ava Max Whatever Columbia/Kygo	SME	13,784	-24%	213	83.87	-32%
18	17	Olly Alexander Dizzy Polydor	UMG	4,774	17%	249	76.74	0%
19	1	Beyoncé Texas Hold 'Em Columbia/Parkwood Ent.	SME	12,221	-50%	236	76.46	-66%
20	13	Dua Lipa Illusion Warner	WMG	7,408	128%	221	71.65	-20%
21	NEW	Kygo & Zak Abel Ft Nile Rodgers For Life Columbia/Kygo	SME	9,811	457%	155	71.21	404%
22	18	Zara Larsson & David Guetta On My... Black Butter/Parlophone	SME	10,936	-17%	147	68.71	-10%
23	NEW	Jess Glynne Easy EMI	UMG	3,718	623%	149	66.59	1370%
24	NEW	Will Young Falling Deep BMG	IND.	1,598	537%	64	61.88	131%
25	39	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me Parlophone	WMG	5,519	147%	130	61.74	21%
26	23	Dua Lipa Houdini Warner	WMG	9,365	-23%	242	61.23	-17%
27	NEW	Post Malone Ft Morgan Wallen I Had Some Help Republic	UMG	3,229	-	180	60.37	-
28	19	Becky Hill & David Guetta Remember Polydor	UMG	5,408	-22%	167	60.09	-21%
29	NEW	Benson Boone Slow It Down Warner	WMG	6,634	109%	169	59.27	117%
30	NEW	Travis Gaslight BMG	IND.	1,982	37%	89	58.36	61%
31	NEW	Beyoncé & Miley Cyrus II Most Wanted Columbia/Parkwood Ent.	SME	2,215	271%	129	57.64	290%
32	40	Harry Styles As It Was Columbia	SME	6,467	-1%	238	53.68	5%
33	28	Taylor Swift Cruel Summer EMI	UMG	8,401	-13%	227	53.46	-18%
34	NEW	Aitch Famous Girl NQ	IND.	2,611	329%	43	52.97	333%
35	48	Lewis Capaldi Strangers Vertigo	UMG	6,152	-7%	81	49.79	17%
36	NEW	Raye Ft 070 Shake Escapism Human Re Sources	IND	3,200	-5%	100	49.53	49%
37	42	Anne-Marie & Shania Twain Unhealthy Atlantic/Asylum/EMI	WMG	7,076	-7%	185	49.26	8%
38	NEW	Rag'N'Bone Man What Do You Believe In? Columbia	SME	1,740	-	100	48.73	-
39	NEW	Paul Weller Rise Up Singing Polydor	UMG	692	424%	70	48.47	195%
40	NEW	The Last Dinner Party Sinner Island	UMG	935	99%	27	48.45	174%
41	50	Miley Cyrus Flowers Columbia	SME	5,686	-2%	240	45.07	7%
42	21	Rema & Selena Gomez Calm Down Jonzing Worldwide/Mavin	UMG	5,824	-33%	162	44.49	-40%
43	NEW	Lenny Kravitz Human BMG	WMG	684	64%	43	43.65	1903%
44	30	Paul Russell Lil Boo Thang RCA	SME	6,932	-28%	123	43.15	-29%
45	NEW	Shygirl & SG Lewis Mr Useless Because	UMG	723	-12%	64	42.21	41%
46	RE	Joel Corry Ft MNEK Head & Heart Asylum/Perfect Havoc	WMG	3,582	4%	224	41.57	32%
47	RE	The Weeknd Blinding Lights Republic/XO	UMG	3,904	2%	236	41.4	5%
48	NEW	Chappell Roan Good Luck, Babe! Island	UMG	4,020	1214%	158	40.7	366%
49	NEW	Beabadoobee Take A Bite Dirty Hit	IND.	657	-	72	40.47	-
50	NEW	Kane Brown & Marshmello Miles On It Columbia	SME	1,165	-	96	40.36	-

UK TV AIRPLAY TOP 50

TM	LM	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	TREND%	STNS
1	40	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso / Island	UMG	647	161%	5
2	1	Calvin Harris & Rag'N'Bone Man Lovers In A... / Columbia	SME	619	-31%	5
3	3	Rudimental & Skepsis Ft... Green & Gold / Columbia	SME	615	-17%	5
4	33	Perrie Forget About Us / Columbia	SME	590	108%	5
5	17	Dasha Austin / Warner	WMG	562	29%	6
6	35	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me / Parlophone	WMG	512	81%	5
7	2	Beyoncé Texas Hold 'Em / Columbia/Parkwood Ent.	SME	504	-33%	5
8	4	Benson Boone Beautiful Things / Warner	WMG	496	-31%	4
9	26	Hozier Too Sweet / Island	UMG	488	44%	5
10	15	Nathan Dawe We Ain't Here For Long / Atlantic	WMG	488	6%	5
11	39	Dua Lipa Illusion / Warner	WMG	481	89%	5
12	NEW	D.Guetta/OneRepublic I Don't... / Interscope/Parlophone	WMG	475	411%	6
13	NEW	Shaboozey A Bar Song... / American Dogwood/Empire	IND.	475	1257%	5
14	NEW	Headie One & Stormzy Ft... Cry No More / Columbia	SME	445	960%	6
15	11	Jax Jones & Zoe Wees Never Be Lonely / Polydor	UMG	445	-19%	5
16	NEW	Taylor Swift Ft Post Malone Fortnight / EMI	UMG	444	845%	5
17	10	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends... / Republic	UMG	438	-21%	4
18	13	Noah Kahan Stick Season / Republic	UMG	392	-21%	5
19	NEW	Mark Ambor Belong Together / Hundred Days	IND.	386	294%	6
20	25	Benson Boone Slow It Down / Warner	WMG	351	3%	5
21	12	Cassö, Raye & D Block Europe Prada / Ministry Of Sound	SME	343	-33%	5
22	29	Becky Hill Outside Of Love / Polydor	UMG	341	13%	4
23	16	Jack Harlow Lovin On Me / Atlantic	WMG	340	-24%	5
24	9	Bryson Tiller Whatever She Wants / Relentless	SME	323	-43%	5
25	24	Doja Cat Ft Teezo Touchdown Masc / Ministry Of Sound	SME	315	-9%	3
26	NEW	Aitch Famous Girl / NQ	IND.	288	-	3
27	23	Galantis/D.Guetta/5 Seconds Of... Lighter / Big Beat	WMG	278	-20%	2
28	5	Olivia Rodrigo Obsessed / Geffen	UMG	248	-65%	4
29	21	Paul Russell Lil Boo Thang / RCA	SME	238	-34%	5
30	14	Tyla Water / Since '93/RCA	SME	236	-50%	5
31	6	Kygo & Ava Max Whatever / Columbia/Kygo	SME	232	-66%	4
32	NEW	Paul Russell Eat Pray Love / RCA	SME	219	71%	3
33	32	Muni Long Made For Me / Def Jam	UMG	215	-25%	3
34	NEW	Kygo & Zak Abel Ft... For Life / Columbia/Kygo	SME	210	-	3
35	8	Michael Marcagi Scared To Start / Warner	WMG	206	-67%	4
36	NEW	Slay & Sigma Kenny / RCA	SME	197	181%	4
37	30	Tate McRae Greedy / Ministry Of Sound	SME	189	-36%	4
38	31	NewEra Birds In The Sky / Warner	WMG	187	-36%	4
39	RE	Jazzy Giving Me / Chaos	UMG	184	28%	5
40	NEW	Post Malone Ft.... I Had Some Help / Republic	UMG	180	-	4
41	NEW	Teddy Swims The Door / Atlantic	WMG	171	-	5
42	34	Meghan Trainor & T-Pain Been Like This / Epic	SME	169	-40%	3
43	NEW	YG Marley Praise Jah In The Moonlight / YG Marley	IND.	169	-	2
44	NEW	Drake Ft... Rich Baby Daddy / OVO/Republic	UMG	166	-9%	5
45	19	Becky Hill & Sonny Fodera Never Be Alone / Polydor	UMG	166	-55%	4
46	NEW	AJ Tracey Joga Bonito / Revenge	IND.	164	-	5
47	NEW	Taylor Swift So Long, London / EMI	UMG	157	336%	2
48	22	Zara Larsson You Love Who You Love / Black Butter	SME	155	-57%	2
49	RE	Dua Lipa Houdini / Warner	WMG	149	-19%	5
50	27	Kenya Grace Strangers / FFRR	WMG	144	-57%	5

EU RADIO AIRPLAY TOP 50

TM	ARTIST/TITLE		COMPANY	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	STNS	IMPACTS
1	Beyoncé	Texas Hold 'Em	RCA	SME	98,518	1,586	2,581.35m
2	Benson Boone	Beautiful Things	Warner Records	WMG	96,336	1,322	2,206.11m
3	Cyril	Stumblin' In	Spinnin' Records	WMG	73,565	1,071	2,146.53m
4	Dua Lipa	Training Season	Warner Records	WMG	77,446	1,384	1,914.54m
5	David Guetta & OneRe..	I Don't Wanna Wait	Warner Records	WMG	80,747	1,321	1,839.81m
6	Kygo & Ava Max	Whatever	Sony Music	SME	85,782	1,255	1,646.93m
7	Teddy Swims	Lose Control	Warner Music New	WMG	92,245	1,511	1,609.52m
8	Artemas	I Like The Way You K..	Warner Records	WMG	59,207	980	1,394.05m
9	Dua Lipa	Houdini	Warner Records	WMG	58,409	1,624	1,366.40m
10	Disturbed	The Sound Of Silence..	Spinnin' Records	WMG	30,172	617	1,238.32m
11	Lost Frequencies fea..	Head Down	Insanity Records	SME	42,334	686	1,137.96m
12	Purple Disco Machine..	Beat Of Your Heart	Insanity Records	SME	49,073	883	1,098.80m
13	Ofenbach feat. Norma..	Overdrive	Warner Music Frar	WMG	45,470	916	1,059.64m
14	Sabrina Carpenter	Espresso	Polydor	UMG	58,248	1,192	1,051.19m
15	Hozier	Too Sweet	Universal Music	UMG	56,129	1,219	1,025.65m
16	Taylor Swift feat. P..	Fortnight	EMI	UMG	58,879	1,246	1,018.12m
17	Calvin Harris x Rag'..	Lovers In A Past Life	Columbia	SME	72,629	1,243	965.90m
18	Jax Jones & Zoe Wees	Never Be Lonely	Polydor	UMG	46,190	783	921.64m
19	Ariana Grande	we can't be friends ..	Universal Music	UMG	51,305	1,060	901.56m
20	Dasha	Austin (Boots Stop W..	Warner Records	WMG	49,765	883	900.51m
21	Dua Lipa	Illusion	Warner Records	WMG	46,475	1,261	855.19m
22	Leony	Simple Life	Kontor Records	Ind.	26,053	352	842.35m
23	Sia	Gimme Love	Warner Music	WMG	30,165	884	836.74m
24	Tate McRae	greedy	Ministry Of Sound	SME	43,658	1,087	770.75m
25	Shakira feat. Cardi B	Punteria	Sony Music	SME	28,139	624	753.34m
26	KAMRAD	So Good	Sony Music	SME	22,200	340	727.52m
27	Miley Cyrus	Flowers	Sony Music	SME	32,830	1,738	723.59m
28	Robin Schulz & Rita ..	I'll Be There	Warner Music Cen	WMG	22,115	491	669.83m
29	Pink	All Out Of Fight	RCA	SME	12,862	296	664.70m
30	Mark Ambor	Belong Together	Hundred Days Rec	Ind.	24,088	696	652.34m
31	Imagine Dragons	Eyes Closed	Polydor	UMG	24,146	608	648.45m
32	Kenya Grace	Strangers	Warner Records	WMG	36,411	957	644.82m
33	Taylor Swift	Cruel Summer	Universal Music	UMG	30,012	1,076	637.69m
34	Glockenbach x Chris ..	Magic Moment	Koch Universal Mu	UMG	20,547	274	630.85m
35	ClockClock	Love U Again	WEFOR	UMG	16,356	246	624.34m
36	Joseph Kamel & Julie..	Beau	Sony Music	SME	12,926	182	623.83m
37	Teddy Swims	The Door	Warner Records	WMG	30,337	821	620.27m
38	ISAAK	Always On The Run	Good Kid Records	UMG	15,339	315	607.27m
39	Pierre Garnier	Ceux Qu'on Était	Sony Music	SME	12,387	176	580.95m
40	Zara Larsson	Memory Lane	Sony Music	SME	18,244	259	534.54m
41	Ray Dalton	ALL WE GOT	Sony Music	SME	22,096	432	518.20m
42	Justin Timberlake	Selfish	RCA	SME	31,854	884	503.09m
43	Linkin Park	Friendly Fire	Warner Music	WMG	12,848	311	465.99m
44	Ella Henderson x Rud..	Alibi	Atlantic	WMG	37,960	659	458.85m
45	Zerb & Sofiya Nzau	Mwaki	Th3rd Brain	Ind.	32,719	775	447.25m
46	Noah Kahan	Stick Season	Universal Music	UMG	36,411	653	446.87m
47	Harry Styles	As It Was	Sony Music	SME	22,405	1,538	439.21m
48	Nico Santos feat. Fa..	Where You Are	Universal Music	UMG	15,962	298	433.85m
49	Weeknd, The	Blinding Lights	Island	UMG	17,463	1,700	420.45m
50	twocolors x Safri Du..	Cynical	Universal Music	UMG	17,104	523	410.19m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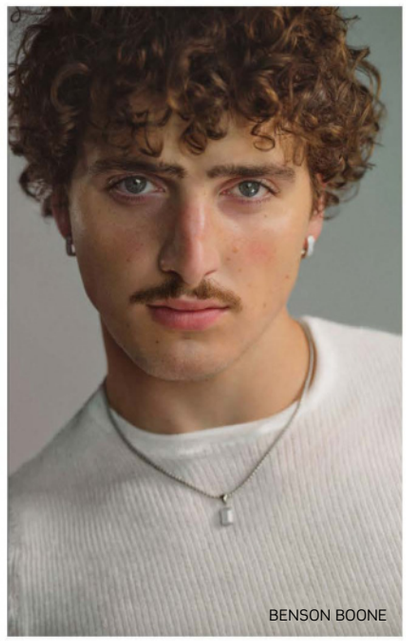
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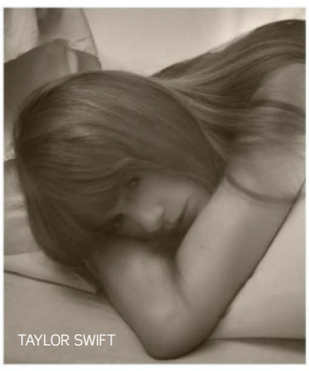
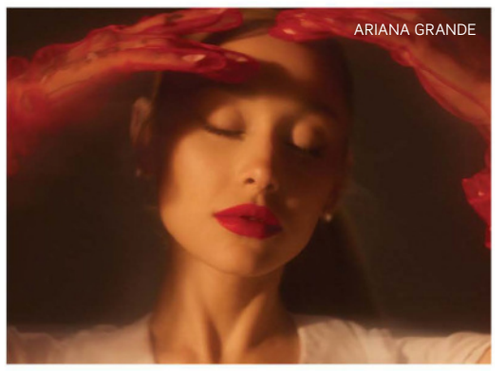
DUA LIPA


TAYLOR SWIFT

JAX JONES


ARIANA GRANDE

STREAMING

Spotify

GLOBAL

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Tommy Richman Million Dollar Baby
2	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
3	Kendrick Lamar Not Like Us
4	FloyyMenor Gata Only
5	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
6	Hozier Too Sweet
7	Taylor Swift Fortnight (Feat. Post Malone)
8	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
9	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
10	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
11	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For...)
12	Kendrick Lamar Euphoria
13	Djo End Of Beginning
14	Teddy Swims Lose Control
15	Taylor Swift I Can Do It With A Broken Heart
16	Billie Eilish Lunch
17	Future Like That
18	Rvssian Santa
19	The Weeknd One Of The Girls (with Jennie...)
20	SZA Saturn

EUROPE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
2	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
3	FloyyMenor Gata Only
4	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
5	Hozier Too Sweet
6	Tommy Richman Million Dollar Baby
7	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
8	Jaxomy Pedro
9	Mark Ambor Belong Together
10	Teddy Swims Lose Control
11	Kendrick Lamar Not Like Us
12	Taylor Swift Fortnight (feat. Post Malone)
13	Joost Europapa
14	Billie Eilish Lunch
15	Dasha Austin
16	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
17	Djo End Of Beginning
18	Cassö Prada
19	Beyoncé Texas Hold 'Em
20	Cyril Stumblin' In

UNITED KINGDOM

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Hozier Too Sweet
2	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
3	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
4	Noah Kahan Stick Season
5	Djo End Of Beginning
6	Teddy Swims Lose Control
7	Beyoncé Texas Hold 'Em
8	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For...)
9	Dasha Austin
10	Michael Marcagi Scared To Start
11	Tate McRae Greedy
12	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
13	Cassö, Raye, D-Block Europe Prada
14	Future, Metro Boomin... Like That
15	Mark Ambor Belong Together
16	Taylor Swift Fortnight (Feat. Post Malone)
17	Taylor Swift Cruel Summer
18	Natasha Bedingfield Unwritten
19	¥$ Carnival
20	Bryson Tiller Whatever She Wants

FRANCE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Carbonne Imagine
2	KeBlack Boucan (feat. Franglish)
3	Franglish Position
4	FloyyMenor Gata Only
5	Gazo Mami Wata
6	Jungeli Petit Génie
7	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
8	Jul Oh Qu'elle Est Belle
9	Disturbed The Sound Of Silence...
10	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
11	KeBlack Aucune Attache
12	Pierre Garnier Ceux Qu'on Était
13	Zola Temps En Temps
14	Slimane Mon Amour
15	Heuss L'enfoiré Mélanine
16	Teddy Swims Lose Control
17	Gims Spider
18	Werenoi Tu Connais
19	Dadju I Love You
20	Da Uzi Michael Jordan

GERMANY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
2	Hozier Too Sweet
3	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
4	Tommy Richman Million Dollar Baby
5	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
6	Kendrick Lamar Not Like Us
7	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
8	Taylor Swift Fortnight (Feat. Post Malone)
9	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
10	Noah Kahan Stick Season
11	Dasha Austin
12	Teddy Swims Lose Control
13	Taylor Swift I Can Do It With A Broken Heart
14	Mark Ambor Belong Together
15	Billie Eilish Lunch
16	Djo End Of Beginning
17	Michael Marcagi Scared To Start
18	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For...)
19	Benson Boone Slow It Down
20	Cassö, Raye, D-Block Europe Prada

KENDRICK LAMAR

SABRINA CARPENTER

ARTEMAS

BEYONCÉ

HOZIER

NETHERLANDS

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Roxy Dekker Sugardaddy
2	Joost Europapa
3	Frenna Pretty Girls
4	Mark Ambor Belong Together
5	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
6	Cyril Stumblin' In
7	Jaxomy Pedro
8	Mr. Belt & Wezol It's Not Right But It's Okay
9	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
10	Benson Boone Beautiful Things

NORWAY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
2	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
3	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
4	Hozier Too Sweet
5	Søte Og Rare Gutter Bærum Bitches (Mannschaft)
6	Bausa Sølvskje
7	VC Barre Soldat - Rmx
8	Mark Ambor Belong Together
9	Benson Boone Beautiful Things
10	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me

SPAIN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Saiko Badgyal
2	Rvssian Santa
3	Myke Towers Adivino
4	Floyymenor Gata Only
5	Gonzy X'clusivo – Remix
6	El Bobe El Conjuntito
7	Saiko Yo Lo Soñé
8	Feid Luna
9	Morad Lo Que Tiene
10	Izaak Bby Boo – Remix

SWEDEN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
2	Purple Disco Machine Honey Boy (Feat. Nile Rodgers..)
3	Hooja Vem Fan E Du?
4	Artemas I Like The Way You Kiss Me
5	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
6	Sarettii Hemsk
7	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
8	Bolaget Välkommen Ner
9	Miss Li Maraton (Feat. Eah Jé)
10	Hozier Too Sweet

UNITED STATES

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Kendrick Lamar Not Like Us
2	Tommy Richman Million Dollar Baby
3	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
4	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy)
5	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso
6	Kendrick Lamar Euphoria
7	Future Like That
8	Taylor Swift Fortnight (Feat. Post Malone)
9	Hozier Too Sweet
10	Taylor Swift I Can Do It With A Broken Heart

vevo

STREAMING – MUSIC VIDEO

WORLDWIDE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	FloyyMenor, Cris MJ Gata Only
2	Maluma, Carin Leon Según Quién (Official Video)
3	CantaJuego Soy Una Taza (Version Mexico)
4	The Weeknd Save Your Tears (Official Music Video)
5	Yuridia, Angela Aguilar Qué Agonía (Video Oficial)
6	Karol G, Shakira TQG (Official Video)
7	Karol G Mi Ex Tenía Razón (Official Video)
8	Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars Uptown Funk (Official Video)
9	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For Africa)...
10	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso (Official Video)
11	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For Your Love)...
12	Becky G Por El Contrario (With Leonardo...)
13	Luis Fonsi Despacito (Ft. Daddy Yankee)
14	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music Video)
15	50 Cent In Da Club (Official Music Video)
16	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy) [Official Visualizer]
17	Future, Metro Boomin, Kendrick Lamar Like That (Official Audio)
18	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
19	Billie Eilish Lunch
20	Madison Beer Make You Mine (Official Music Video)

UNITED KINGDOM

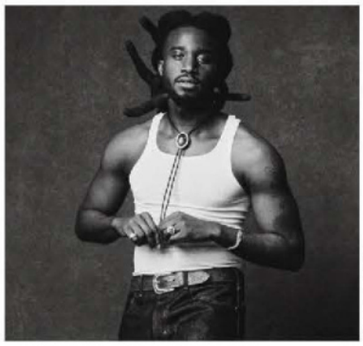
TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy) [Official Visualizer]
2	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso (Official Video)
3	Noah Kahan Stick Season (Official Music Video)
4	Chase & Status, Bou Baddadan ft. Irah, Flowdan, Trigga, Takura
5	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music Video)
6	JoJo Siwa Karma (Official Video)
7	Pozer Malicious Intentions
8	Madison Beer Make You Mine
9	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat. Morgan Wallen)...
10	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
11	Billie Eilish Lunch
12	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For Africa) (The...)
13	Jazzy Giving Me (Official Visualiser)
14	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For Your Love)...
15	Dwayne Johnson Where You Are (From "Moana"/Sing-Along)
16	Switch Disco Feat. Ella Henderson Reat (Lyric Video)
17	Wheatus Teenage Dirtbag
18	Lady Gaga, Bradley Cooper Shallow (From A Star Is Born) (Official...)
19	Mark Ronson Uptown Funk (Official Video) ft. Bruno Mars
20	Tyla Water (Official Music Video)

UNITED STATES

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy) [Official Visualizer]
2	Future, Metro Boomin, Kendrick Lamar Like That (Official Audio)
3	Post Malone ft. Morgan Wallen I Had Some Help
4	GloRilla Yeah Glo! (Official Music Video)
5	Future, Metro Boomin, Travis Scott... Type Shit (Official Video)
6	Toosii Favorite Song (Official Video)
7	Big Boogie, DJ Drama feat. GloRilla Bop
8	Morgan Wallen Thinkin' Bout Me
9	Usher, Summer Walker, 21 Savage Good Good (Official Music Video)
10	Jessie Murph, Jelly Roll Wild Ones (Official Video)
11	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso (Official Video)
12	JoJo Siwa Karma (Official Video)
13	Fridayy When It Comes To You
14	SZA Snooze (Audio)
15	Maluma, Carin Leon Según Quién
16	GloRilla, Cardi B Tomorrow 2
17	Billie Eilish Lunch
18	Yuridia, Angela Aguilar Qué Agonía (Video Oficial)
19	Morgan Wallen Lies Lies Lies (Live From Abbey Road...)
20	Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars Uptown Funk (Official Video)

NEW ARTISTS – UK

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	JoJo Siwa Karma
2	Pozer Malicious Intentions
3	Myles Smith Stargazing
4	Perrie Forget About Us
5	Tyla ft. Gunna & Skillibeng Jump
6	China Anne McClain What's My Name (Red Version)...
7	Tyla Art
8	Olly Alexander (Years & Years) Dizzy
9	Chappell Roan Good Luck, Babe!
10	Tems Love Me JeJe
11	Isabel LaRosa Favorite
12	Altégo Couldn't Care Less
13	Danny Bond Never Leave
14	Sasha Keable Hold Up
15	Mette Bet (Visualizer)
16	Tyla Water (Remix – Official Music Video)
17	FloLikeThis Walk Like This
18	Kenzie Close To You
19	Perrie Forget About Us
20	Between Friends Drive Over Me (Live Performance) | Vevo



SHABOOZEY

SABRINA CARPENTER

NOAH KAHAN

GLORILLA

FRANCE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Pierre Garnier Ceux Qu'on Était (Clip Officiel)
2	Gazo, Tiakola Mami Wata (Visualizer)
3	Indila Dernière Danse (Clip Officiel)
4	Amy Winehouse Back To Black
5	Eva Bottega
6	Maître Gims Sapés Comme Jamais Ft. Niska
7	Louise Attaque J't'emmène Au Vent (Clip...)
8	Manau La Tribu De Dana (Clip...)
9	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For...)
10	Joseph Kamel, Julien Doré Beau (Visualizer)

GERMANY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Kati K, Finch Erwischt
2	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For...)
3	Roland Kaiser, Maite Kelly Warum Hast Du Nicht Nein...
4	Madison Beer Make You Mine
5	50 Cent In Da Club (Official Music...)
6	Volker Rosin Tschu Tschu Wah – Die...
7	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
8	Luis Fonsi Despacito ft. Daddy Yankee
9	Billie Eilish Lunch
10	Amy Winehouse Back To Black

AUSTRALIA

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Shaboozey A Bar Song (Tipsy) [Official...]
2	Post Malone I Had Some Help (Feat...)
3	Sabrina Carpenter Espresso (Official Video)
4	Ariana Grande We Can't Be Friends (Wait For...)
5	Madison Beer Make You Mine (Official...)
6	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
7	JoJo Siwa Karma (Official Video)
8	Taylor Swift Blank Space
9	Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars Uptown Funk (Official Video)
10	Billie Eilish Lunch

SPAIN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Lola Indigo, Manuel Turizo 1000Cosas (Official Video)
2	Chayanne Bailando Bachata (Official...)
3	Enrique Iglesias, Maria Becerra Asi Es La Vida (Official Video)
4	Aitana, Sebastián Yatra Akureyri (Video Oficial)
5	Omar Montes La Sevillana (Official Video)
6	Ana Mena Madrid City (Video Oficial)
7	Sebastián Yatra, Manuel Turizo... Vagabundo (Official Video)
8	Marshmello, Manuel Turizo El Merengue (Official Video)
9	CantaJuego Soy Una Taza (Version Mexico)
10	FloyyMenor, Cris MJ Gata Only

ITALY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Mahmood Tuta Gold (Sanremo 2024)
2	Lazza 100 Messaggi
3	Ricchi E Poveri Ma Non Tutta La Vita...
4	Tony Effe Miu Miu (Visual)
5	Emma Apnea (Official Video...)
6	Lazza 100 Messaggi (Lyric Video)
7	Marco Mengoni Due Vite (Official Video...)
8	Piccolo Coro Dell'antoniano Volevo Un Gatto Nero...
9	Geolier Come Vuoi (Official Video)
10	Tony Effe, Bresh, Tedua Dopo Le 4 (Visual)

TikTok Trending

INSIDE THE MOST VIRAL TRACKS OF THE MONTH

UNITED KINGDOM

Myles Smith
Stargazing

Video Creations: 62,000

Since its release in early May, Myles Smith's single Stargazing has taken TikTok by storm, featuring in over 62,000 videos and counting. The track's remarkable traction can be traced back to the significant buzz it generated even before its launch, amassing nearly 30,000 creations on TikTok with just the pre-release sound.

Stargazing took off upon its official release, with thousands of listeners finding the track on TikTok's #NewMusic hub and creating videos with the sound. Now with 1.1 million followers on his page, the Luton-born songwriter is a TikTok sensation.

Adam Read, TikTok UK's music editorial manager, UK & Ireland, pays tribute to how Smith has cultivated a fanbase on and off the platform.

"Myles Smith's journey has been extraordinary and we're delighted to see how the TikTok community has supported him," he says. "His presence on the platform shows how impactful enjoying your own music and engaging with fans can be – he kickstarted a trend which captures friends and loved ones dancing to Stargazing, propelling it to viral status even before its official release. Blending pop, Americana and folk, Myles' music also has a broad appeal, evidenced by the fact that Stargazing debuted at No.12 on the UK Official Charts."

"Myles Smith's journey has been extraordinary and we're delighted to see how the TikTok community has supported him"
Adam Read, TikTok

Bronski Beat
Smalltown Boy

Video Creations: 71,000

Bronski Beat's 1984 hit Smalltown Boy has found a new life on TikTok fuelled by a cross-generational dance trend which has seen creators asking their parents to demonstrate their '80s moves. It has skyrocketed on the platform, sparking over 66,000 videos and prompting celebrities like Jennifer Garner to share their own videos. With a quintessentially '80s sound that the TikTok community is loving, Smalltown Boy shows no signs of slowing down any time soon and has even re-entered the UK Official Charts for the first time in over a decade.

Darkoo & Dess Dior
Favourite Girl

Video Creations: 35,000

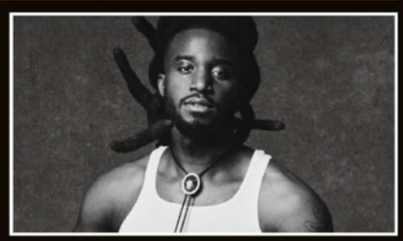
Darkoo first captured the attention of listeners in 2020 with her debut hit Gangsta. Since then, she has become a prominent figure in the UK's Afroswing scene. Her latest track, Favourite Girl, is a collaboration with Dess Dior, bringing both fanbases together in a fusion of Afroswing and rap. The track initially gained momentum through a TikTok #NewMusic campaign where Darkoo previewed the song as her next summer hit. It has since taken on a life of its own, inspiring new dance trends as groups of friends come together to showcase their choreography.

GLOBAL

Billie Eilish
Blue

Video Creations: 817,000

Blue is the closing track on Billie Eilish's new album Hit Me Hard And Soft, and has exploded on TikTok after much anticipation. Written years ago, an unfinished version of the song (True Blue) was leaked in 2022 and, with fans desperate for an official release, Eilish and her brother Finneas have reworked and resurrected it. During Eilish's TikTok takeover for the album, she unveiled a Fan Spotlight feature which allows artists to highlight fan videos on their pages, and responses to Blue have dominated Eilish's.



Shaboozey
A Bar Song (Tipsy)

Video Creations: 367,000

Earlier this year, Beyoncé's Cowboy Carter helped introduce Shaboozey to the world, with the country artist featuring on two tracks alongside Queen Bey. Since then, Shaboozey has gone from strength to strength, scoring a best-selling single with A Bar Song (Tipsy). The track, which interpolates J-Kwon's 2004 debut single Tipsy, has sparked a popular dance trend among TikTok users. Country music's 2024 domination continues all over TikTok, with A Bar Song joining Dasha's Austin and Beyoncé's Texas Hold 'Em.

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THE Music Week ARCHIVE

5 years ago...

TOP STORY

TIE THE KNOT

"We're not a band anymore, we're a culture," so declared Slipknot's founding member and percussionist Shawn 'Clown' Crahan on our cover, as the Iowan metal stars headed up our 2019 Rock Issue.

His grand proclamation made sense. Not only were the group about to release their new album, We Are Not Your Kind, and headline Download, they were also overseeing the expansion of their own Knotfest Festival. It all made for the perfect time for *Music Week* to catch up with the band and their manager, Cory Brennan, to look at how they were proudly flying the flag for contemporary metal.

"There is nothing I like more than shoving the words 'rock is dead' back down shitty throats," grinned frontman Corey Taylor.

In a career-spanning interview Taylor, Crahan and Brennan told the story of how a masked nonet, playing some of the most hostile music ever recorded, achieved No.1 albums and overcame tragedy, with bassist Paul Gray dying in 2010. Brennan also reflected on how the band were there for him after he had a stroke.

"A lot of people in this business wouldn't have stuck by my side, but Slipknot did through thick and thin," he praised.

Crahan also gave his thoughts as to where Slipknot fit into a modern, streaming-led musical landscape.

"I'm here to tell you that no one is cooler than Slipknot," he said. "We're the real deal. We play our own instruments, we don't play to tape, we don't get loads of cash to push buttons. I hate pretentious people who want to deny the fact that we are pop culture. Look at us: masks, the stage, everything we've done... If we aren't pop culture what really is?"

Eventually, We Are Not Your Kind – modestly proclaimed by Crahan as being "from beginning to end, a masterpiece" – would go on to debut at No.1 in the US and the UK. Point proven, Clown.

Also inside... We took a look behind the scenes at **Download Festival** and **Reading And Leeds**... **Fender** CEO **Andrew Mooney** told us how the iconic guitar brand was launching a host of artist and consumer initiatives... **Foo Fighters** guitarist **Chris Shiflett** unveiled his latest solo plans... **Skunk Anansie** legend **Skin** tackled the Aftershow... **Sum 41**'s **Deryck Whibley** recalled making their infectious hit **In Too Deep**... **Michael Rivalland** stepped up as **Virgin Records**' new GM... **Island Records' Darcus Beese** and **Louis Bloom** reflected on how streaming was "levelling the playing field" for US and UK acts... **Justin Bieber** and **Ed Sheeran** had the No.1 single with **I Don't Care**, while **Lewis Capaldi** made it three weeks at the top with his album **Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent**...

10 years ago...

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BIG INTERVIEW
10 Klaxons
"We're continually creative, we always try to push ourselves to entertain"

REPORT
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"There's no doubt physical is declining, but there's still a healthy business there"

ANALYSIS
12 PPL results
"Voluntary licences have increased hundreds of percent in last two years"

'A watershed moment'

FRIENDS AND RIVALS ALIKE EAGER TO SEE IMPACT OF APPLE/BEATS ON STREAMING MUSIC

DIGITAL

BY TOM PHILIPPS

Record executives have hailed Apple's $3 billion acquisition of Beats as another potential milestone for the music industry, with the hope that the merger will boost streaming's impact around the globe.

But the anticipation doesn't stop at the traditional music business. Even natural rivals to Beats Music recognise the significance of Apple's entry to the streaming arena with some hoping the tech giant can build awareness and grow the streaming music pie for all involved.

Apple confirmed its acquisition of Beats last week, including streaming service Beats Music and premium headphone king Beats Electronics, for $2.6 billion plus approximately $400 million that will be paid over time.

Speaking to *Music Week*, Cooking Vinyl boss Martin Goldschmidt said that he hoped to see Apple have a similar impact in the streaming world as it did with music downloads via its revolutionary iTunes platform. "Apple got downloading right and dragged the music industry into the digital age," he said. "This deal is very exciting and, in time, will hopefully prove to be another milestone in the history of recorded music."

Beats Music launched in the US in January this year with an exclusive partnership with telco AT&T. Back then, little was known about the company's proposed worldwide expansion, but with Apple now behind the platform, digital director at Beggars Group Simon Wheeler is anticipating a fast rate of movement both in terms of global footprint and mainstream take-up: "We hope that Apple buying Beats will lead to a rapid international roll out of the Beats service and that they will leverage both brand names to bring streaming music to the mainstream," he said.

Meanwhile, established players in the streaming market have suggested that Apple's move into their territory vindicates a belief that the access-based format is the future. Deezer's VP of Europe Gerrit Schumann is expecting more big name competition to come. "Streaming is the future of music, and as this market delivers greater opportunities, new entrants will inevitably emerge," he said. "Further moves by the big tech companies - Apple, Google and Amazon - are to be expected, but their agendas are far different from ours. As a music company, we believe our approach offers more value to music lovers and to the ecosystem of the industry."

Napster CFO Ethan Rudin added: "We've said for a while that this is going to be a year of change. Digital music is ripe for consolidation and it's going to take more than curation or discovery enhancements to win. Making collection a sticky experience and creating authentic ways to build community around music is essential to convincing music lovers to pay for a music service.

"There's no question this will reshuffle the deck in the digital music market. How could it not?" he added. "It's going to make things tough for companies playing on the fringe, but it's going to be a fun year. There's more competition than ever and it's helping build awareness for a market that's been fragmented for many years. We feel strongly that we'll see some clear [illegible] by the end of the year."

Rudin also pointed out that by acquiring Beats Music, Apple had by no means bought a silver bullet in the streaming music battle: "Apple does get a streaming offering, but they've got their work cut out for them," he warned. "Signing the deal was just the beginning. Now, they'll need to negotiate with the labels for a new set of rights. And, they'll still need to figure out a strategy for launching outside the US, which is where the real growth is going to happen."

Eldridge and Morris in for industry networking night

UROK Management director Sam Eldridge will join Warner Music UK CEO Max Lousada on stage for a special interview at the next Music Week Evening Sessions event in London this month - and there'll be music from the hotly-tipped Rae Morris.

The networking event will take place on June 18 at Soho's newest venue, The Ham Yard Hotel. Both Lousada and Eldridge will be quizzed on stage by *Music Week* editor Tim Ingham in a live interview.

Eldridge manages a number of high-profile UK artists including BRIT-winning rapper and singer-songwriter Plan B. His other clients include Ivor Novello-winning Tom Odell and Jess Glynne who has featured on two No.1 singles in 2014 – Clean Bandit's Rather Be and Route 94's My Love. Eldridge also manages much-loved indie-rock band, Mystery Jets.

Food and drinks will be laid on for delegates, while live music will come from Blackpool singer/songwriter Morris, who is signed to Atlantic and appeared on Bombay Bicycle Club's recently-released acclaimed LP, So Long, See You Tomorrow.

Eldridge was named Manager of the Year at the Artist & Manager Awards in 2012 - as Plan B was named Artist of the Year.

In addition to his management company, he co-founded the highly influential Metrik Records, through XL Recordings. It now continues as a publishing company through BMG.

The first ever Music Week Evening Sessions took place in February, with Live Nation CEO Michael Rapino and European Concerts president John Reid.

■ Early bird tickets to June's Music Week Evening Sessions are available now for just £45 each. Contact Sara.Mather@intentmedia.co.uk or call 020 7226 7246 to book yours.

IT'S NOT OVER YET

We caught up with British nu-rave stars Klaxons as they reached a critical point in their career. Having been dropped by Polydor, the group were starting afresh with their third album, Love Frequency, arriving on their own Akashic Rekords, via a deal with Sony Red. "Our label services deal is very forward-thinking," hailed the group's Jamie Reynolds of their agreement, which marked the first official release for Sony Red. "We're being the first to champion this new method of putting music out there." Label services? Nah, no way. It'll never catch on...

SHINY HAPPY PPL

Sod balloons and cakes, for its 80th anniversary, we dug deep into PPL's financial performance. In 2014, PPL reported that it had collected a then-record £176.9 million in licence fee income for 2013 – which was up 4% year on year. In their latest results issued in April this year, PPL were once again up 4%, with the collection society generating £283.5 million of revenue in 2023 – the highest level of income in its 90-year history.

TOP STORY
HARD TO BEATS

What was the 'watershed moment' everyone was talking about in June 2014, you ask? Oh, nothing big, really, just Apple's low-key $3 *billion* acquisition of Beats, which included its Beats Music streaming service and Beats Electronics headphones. In turn, Beats co-founders Jimmy Iovine and Dr Dre revealed they were to join the Apple family. "There's no question this will reshuffle the deck in the digital music market," said Napster CFO Ethan Rudin. "How could it not? It's going to make things tough for companies on the fringe." The rest, as they say, is history.

Also inside... **Sam Smith**'s **In The Lonely Hour** became the first debut album of 2014 to hit gold status in the UK in its first week... **Warner Music**'s **ADA** signed a new partnership with UK-based indie **B*Unique**... We looked at the rise and rise of **InGrooves**... **Raw Power Management** celebrated the Stateside success of **Bring Me The Horizon**... **Secondcity**'s **I Wanna Feel** was the newly crowned No.1 single, while Sam Smith's aforementioned debut was the top album...

25 years ago...

FOR EVERYONE IN THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

music week

Trade fears millennium overload

Kylie in surprise Parlophone deal

Dickins completes 'alternative' A&R team

With 30 weeks to go before the new millennium arrived, the **millennium bug** was the least of the industry's concerns, as *Music Week* looked at the implications of retail closures, changing consumer habits and a release schedule full of novelty compilations... **Kylie Minogue** bucked expectation by signing with **Parlophone**... **Rob Dickins** made his first hires at his new label **Instant Karma**... **Baz Luhrmann** was the new No.1 single with **Everybody's Free** (**To Wear Sunscreen**), while **Boyzone**'s **By Request** topped the albums chart...

30 years ago...

music week

Charts set for change

Industry kept waiting over MMC report

Radical relaunch planned for TOTP

REEL 2 REAL
THE MAD STUNTMAN
GO ON MOVE

Record companies were looking to reduce the number of **eligible formats** in the **singles chart** from four to three... **Top Of The Pops** executive producer **Ric Blaxill** was planning a "radical shake-up" of the TV show... A record 130 albums were put forward for the **Mercury Music Prize**... The family of **David Platz** were planning a memorial service for the late veteran music publisher... **Wet Wet Wet** were on top of the singles chart with **Love Is All Around**, while **2 Unlimited**'s **Real Things** debuted at No.1 on the albums chart...

THE AFTERSHOW

The industry's biggest names have the last word on their life in music...

Michelle Escoffery, songwriter/president, PRS Members' Council

Since making waves with R&B trio **Truce** in the '90s, **Michelle Escoffery** has co-written with the likes of **Tina Turner**, **All Saints**, **Beverley Knight**, **Liberty X** and more. Here, the **PRS Members' Council** president looks back, as we discuss breaking boundaries, working with superstars and fighting for songwriters' rights...

INTERVIEW: COLLEEN HARRIS

Truce to power: *Michelle Escoffery was appointed president of the PRS Members' Council in 2021*

Cathy Dennis and I broke new ground as the only two women signed exclusively to EMI Music Publishing...
"I didn't grasp what it meant initially. Also, at that time [after Truce disbanded in 1998], they didn't put top line writers together in the same room. So, as much as we were the two female writers, we never got to work together. Now, you can have 10 people in a room and there are four top line writers. There was this idea of separating us: 'Well, Cathy's pop and you're more R&B...' But my thing was to try everything at least once and see how I liked it, or if I was any good at it. One of the things I always tell [songwriters] is that only writing in one genre limits your earning capacity. At PRS, we're really passionate about being able to inform and educate our members on profile, income and things like that."

Liberty X's Just A Little was originally written to pitch to Tom Jones...
"I wrote it with George and John Hammond-Hagan [The Big Pockets]. The concept behind the song was about a woman that didn't really know what she had got. In the end, it got put on hold for Anastacia, so we were all excited about that. Then we got a call from Malcolm Dunbar at V2, he was A&R at the time for Liberty X – he said, 'I really, really want this song.' I think the thing that swung it was we managed to negotiate that we would produce the song. Liberty X were great to work with, they came to my house and sang the song. We worked out who was going to sing what and then five days later we were in the studio. It went straight to No.1, so everything aligned."

There's a fine art to keeping your cool around artists you love...
"In 2004, I met D'Angelo and I absolutely choked. It took me a whole two days to even say hello, first of all. I was working with [Artful Dodger's] Mark Hill in New York and we were in Manhattan staying at the W. I saw D'Angelo, I was like, 'I'm sure that's him.' Then the next day he got in the lift and I couldn't even speak. Eventually I said, 'I'm a songwriter, I really admire you.' He was very gracious, he just said, 'Great!' He asked my name, I told him, and that was it. I thought, 'Is that all you could have said, Michelle?!'"

Working with the greats always blows me away...
"Stevie Wonder knows people by their voice and I thought that was brilliant. He learns everyone's names and remembers them. It's like, 'Hi Stevie,' 'Oh, hey Michelle,' and you think, 'How do you do that?!' I also performed with George Michael, who was absolutely a perfectionist. We were in a choir and the rehearsals were so intricate. If one person sang something slightly wrong, George would say, 'Who's that? Hold on, that wasn't right.' Everybody just wanted to get it right, it was an amazing experience."

One of the things I challenged PRS on when I joined was diversity, equity and inclusion...
"We had no people of colour in senior management. If we are representing such a broad membership, surely that should be reflected in the organisation? I think we've progressed a lot. We had a Black music relationship manager, Jacqueline Pelham-Leigh, who has been promoted to business development lead, and now we've got Kenny Barber [relationship manager], so things are moving. We've got a fantastic director of talent, culture and experience, Janeace Thompson; she has been amazing with training staff on inclusion, psychological safety and being open to collaboration. That has a massive effect externally as well."

Without the song, the music business wouldn't exist...
"For a lot of songwriters, the days of getting a massive advance and being able to live off their advance while being creative are gone. We need a new model that supports songwriters so they're not worrying or running to Amazon or Tesco to do a shift because they can't make ends meet. We have to take a really long hard look at how we are supporting the people that are making the songs, to sustain their lives – not just their careers. A lot of great songwriters have left the industry, because they can't make a living. It's work, it's not a hobby. We understand that there are risks and no real guarantees of your song getting out there. But we still have to create, so we should be paid adequately to do so."

"A lot of great songwriters have left the industry because they can't earn a living"
Michelle Escoffery

PHOTO: @shotbyenoma

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